

Florida Forever Work Plan

2004 Annual Update





South Florida Water Management District
Florida Forever Work Plan
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	xiii
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Legislation (Florida Forever and Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan).....	2
Florida Forever Performance Measures.....	10
Project Rankings, Schedule and Resources	10
Chapter 2: Regional Study Area	13
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project (Project Modifications)	15
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Regional Overview.....	15
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Mercury	17
Land Use	17
Study Purpose	19
Study Scope	19
Other Studies.....	20
Permits and Authorizations.....	20
Interim Land Management.....	21
Chapter 3: Kissimmee Region	23
Physical Conditions – Kissimmee Region.....	23
Existing Conditions – Kissimmee Region Water Management	26

Future without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Kissimmee Region	28
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Kissimmee River Restoration	29
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Kissimmee Region	30
Land Use – Kissimmee Region.....	32
Eligible Kissimmee Region Projects	34
Chapter 4: Lake Okeechobee Watershed Region	45
Physical Conditions – Lake Okeechobee Watershed Region	45
Existing Conditions – Lake Okeechobee Water Management	46
Future Without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Lake Okeechobee	49
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Manatee Protection	49
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule.....	49
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Critical Restoration Projects	50
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Lake Okeechobee	50
Land Use – Lake Okeechobee Region.....	51
Eligible Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Projects	52
Other Eligible Projects	52
Chapter 5: Lower West Coast Region	55
Physical Conditions – Lower West Coast Region	55
Existing Conditions – Lower West Coast Region Water Management.....	56
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Critical Restoration Projects	58
Future without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Lower West Coast Region.....	59
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Lower West Coast Region.....	60
Land Use – Lower West Coast Region.....	61

Eligible Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Projects	65
Other Eligible Projects	66
Chapter 6: Upper East Coast Region	73
Physical Conditions – Upper East Coast Region	73
Existing Condition – Upper East Coast Water Management	74
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Critical Restoration Projects	78
Future without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Upper East Coast	78
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Upper East Coast	79
Land Use – Upper East Coast	80
Eligible Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Projects	81
Other Eligible Projects	82
Chapter 7: Everglades Agricultural Area	85
Physical Conditions – Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA)	85
Existing Conditions – Everglades Agriculture Area (EAA) Water Management	86
Future without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA)	86
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) ..	91
Land Use – Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA)	92
Eligible Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Projects	94
Chapter 8: Everglades, Florida Bay and Keys Regions	95
Physical Condition – Everglades, Florida Bay and Keys Regions	95
Existing Conditions – Water Conservation Areas (WCAS) Water Management	98
Existing Conditions – Everglades National Park and Florida Bay Water Management	101
Existing Conditions – Florida Keys Water Management	103

Future without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Natural Areas.....	103
Future without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Florida Bay	103
Future without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Florida Keys	104
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Water Conservation Areas (WCAS) and Everglades National Park Rainfall-Based Rainfall Water Delivery Plans	104
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Emergency Interim Plan.....	104
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Natural Areas.....	105
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Florida Bay	106
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities – Florida Keys	106
Land Use – Water Conservation Areas (WCAS)	107
Land Use – Everglades National Park and Florida Bay	110
Land Use – Florida Keys	111
Eligible Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Projects.....	114
Other Eligible Projects.....	116
 Chapter 9: Water Preserve Areas, Miami-Dade County and North Palm Beach County Regions	 117
Physical Conditions – Water Preserve Areas, Miami-Dade County and North Palm Beach County Regions.....	117
Existing Conditions – Water Preserve Areas, Miami-Dade County and North Palm Beach County.....	119
Future without Plan Condition – Water Quality – Water Preserve Areas, Miami-Dade County and North Palm Beach County.....	120
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Projects	121
Future without Plan Condition – Physical Facilities and Operations – Critical Restoration Projects	125
Water Quality Problems and Opportunities.....	125
Land Use – Water Preserve Areas, Miami-Dade County and North Palm Beach County	127

Eligible Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Projects	127
Other Eligible Projects	133
Chapter 10: Save our Rivers (SOR) Projects	139
Eligible Save our Rivers (SOR) Projects	139
References	143
Appendix A: WMD Florida Forever Goals and Performance Measures	A-1
Appendix B: Current Florida Forever Eligible Projects	B-1
Appendix C: Land Acquisition and Management	C-1
Appendix D: CERP Implementation Schedule	D-1

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Five-Year Florida Forever Water Management District Work Plan Expenditures for CERP Projects.....	7
Table 2.	Estimated Five-Year SFWMD Real Estate Expenditures for Other Projects.....	8
Table 3.	Kissimmee Watershed Water Demands.....	30
Table 4.	Permits in the Kissimmee Watershed	32
Table 5.	Acreage and Percentage of Land Use by County Area.....	34
Table 6.	Kissimmee Watershed Related Water Management Planning Efforts	35
Table 7.	Kissimmee River Restoration Approximate Real Estate Acquisition Information	42
Table A-1	Florida Forever Goals by Project.....	A-6
Table C-1	Acquisition Activity Report (Fiscal Year 2003).....	C-5
Table C-2	Land Stewardship Program Acquisition Summary – 2003.....	C-27
Table C-3	Public Use Opportunities	C-28

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project Plan Area.....	14
Figure 2.	Kissimmee Region.....	23
Figure 3.	Kissimmee Watershed Map.....	24
Figure 4.	Kissimmee River Location Map.....	25
Figure 5.	Kissimmee River Restoration Project Schedule.....	41
Figure 6.	Lake Okeechobee Watershed Region.....	45
Figure 7.	Lower West Coast Region.....	55
Figure 8.	Upper East Coast Region.....	73
Figure 9.	Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA).....	85
Figure 10.	Everglades, Florida Bay and Keys Regions.....	95
Figure 11:	Water Preserve Areas, Miami-Dade County and North Palm Beach County.....	117
Figure C-1	Upper Lakes Land Management Region.....	C-12
Figure C-2	Kissimmee/Okeechobee Land Management Region.....	C-15
Figure C-3	East Coast Land Management Region.....	C-21
Figure C-4	Everglades Land Management Region.....	C-23
Figure C-5	West Coast Land Management Region.....	C-26
Figure D-1	July 2001 Implementation Schedule of Components Contained in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (first page).....	D-3

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ac-ft	acre-feet
ARC	Acquisition and Restoration Council
ASR	Aquifer Storage and Recovery
BBRRCT	Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team
BCNP	Big Cypress National Preserve
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BOD	biochemical oxygen demand
BOR	Basis of Review
C&SF Project	Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project
CARL	Conservation and Recreation Lands
CERP	Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan
cfs	cub feet per second
CREW	Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed
CS	Committee Substitute
CS/CS	Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute
CUP	Consumptive Use Permit
CWA	Clean Water Act
District	South Florida Water Management District
DO	dissolved oxygen
DOF	Division on Forestry
EAA	Everglades Agricultural Area
ECB	East Coast Buffer
EEL	Environmentally Endangered Lands
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ENP	Everglades National Park
ERP	Environmental Resource Permit
F.A.C.	Florida Administrative Code
FAS	Floridan Aquifer System
FCD	Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District
FDACS	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

FDCA	Florida Department of Community Affairs
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FDOH	Florida Department of Health
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FFA	Florida Forever Act
FFAC	Florida Forever Advisory Council
FGFWFC	Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission
FGS	Florida Geological Survey
FPFDD	Fort Pierce Farms Drainage District
F.S.	Florida Statutes
FWC	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FY	Fiscal Year
GCSSF	Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida
GIS	Geographic Information System
gpd	gallons per day
gpm	gallons per minute
IAP	Interim Action Plan
IAS	Intermediate Aquifer System
IFAS	Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
IRL	Indian River Lagoon
KCOL	Kissimmee River Chain of Lake
KICCO	Kissimmee Island Cattle Company
KRR	Kissimmee River Restoration
LFA	Lower Floridan Aquifer
LMD	Land Management Department
LRMCC	Loxahatchee River Management Coordinating Council
LRWMPC	Loxahatchee River Watershed Management Planning Committee
MCL	Maximum Contaminant Level
MFLs	Minimum Flows and Levels
mg/L	milligrams per liter
mgd	million gallons per day
mgy	million gallons per year
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

MPMP	Master Program Management Plan
MS4	Municipal Separate Sewer System
NGVD	National Geodetic Vertical Datum
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NPL	National Priorities List
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NSLRDD	North St. Lucie River Drainage District
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
ORV	off-road vehicle
P-2000	Preservation 2000
PBC	Palm Beach County
PCA	Project Cost Agreement
P.L.	Public Law
PLRG	Pollution Loading Reduction Goals
PWS	Public Water Supply
RAA	Restricted Allocation Area
Restudy	Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project Comprehensive Review Study
RO	Reverse Osmosis
RTA	Reduced Threshold Areas
SAS	Surficial Aquifer System
SB	Senate Bill
SCG	Sugarcane Growers
SDWA	Safe Drinking Water Act
SFRPC	South Florida Regional Planning Council
SFWMD	South Florida Water Management District
SFWMM	South Florida Water Management Model
SJRWMD	St. Johns River Water Management District
SLE	St. Lucie Estuary
SOE	Save Our Everglades
SOR	Save Our Rivers
SOW	Statement of Work

SPF	Standard Project Flood
SR	State Road
STA	Stormwater Treatment Area
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
SWIM	Surface Water Improvement Management
TCRPC	Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
TDS	Total Dissolved Solids
TIITF	Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TSS	Total Suspended Solids
UDB	Urban Development Boundary
UFA	Upper Floridan Aquifer
UIC	Underground Injection Control
U.S.	United States
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOJ	United States Department of Interior
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WCA	Water Conservation Area
WHPA	Wellhead Protection Area
WMLTF	Water Management Lands Trust Fund
WPA	Water Preserve/Management Area
WQC	Water Quality Certification
WRCA	Water Resource Caution Area
WRDA	Water Resources Development Act
WSE	water supply and environmental

Executive Summary

THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT is pleased to present the 2004 Florida Forever Work Plan. The purpose of the Florida Forever Work Plan is to present projects eligible for funding under the Florida Forever Act (Section 259.105, F.S.), and to report on progress and changes since the January 1, 2003 submission.

In 1999, the Florida Forever Program was created, which authorized the issuance of up to \$3 billion in bonds over a 10-year period, to be used for land acquisition (including less-than-fee purchases), water resource development, stormwater management, water body restoration, recreational facility construction, public access improvements, invasive plant control, and related projects. The program is intended to accomplish environmental restoration, enhance public access and recreational enjoyment, promote long-term management goals, and facilitate water resource development.

The water management districts create a five-year plan that identifies projects meeting specific criteria for the Florida Forever program. Each district integrates its surface water improvement and management plans, Save Our Rivers (SOR) land acquisition lists, stormwater management projects, proposed water resource development and water body restoration projects and

other activities that support the goals of Florida Forever.

Thirty-five percent of the Florida Forever bond proceeds are distributed annually to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for land acquisition and capital expenditures in order to implement the priority lists submitted by the water management districts. Over the life of the program, a minimum of 50 percent of the funding is to be used for land acquisition. The South Florida Water Management District's annual net share is \$33,075,000. Including Florida Forever funding, a total of \$282.2 million was spent in fiscal year (FY) 2003 to acquire 19,438 acres of land. In addition, the District surplused a less-than-fee interest and granted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under the Wetlands Reserve Program a conservation easement over 15,369 acres of the Allapattah Ranch acquisition for \$23 million.

The Florida Forever Work Plan lists and describes the 61 projects eligible for Florida Forever funding in the FY 2004-2008 period. The list of eligible projects includes CERP projects, SOR projects and water quality and supply initiatives, plans and studies. The *Estimated Five-Year SFWMD Real Estate Expenditures* to purchase lands for eligible CERP projects is projected to total a billion dollars, approximately \$200 million yearly. Additionally, expenditures to acquire land for the Kissimmee River Restoration and SOR projects are estimated to total \$34.5 million (**Chapter 1**).

In addition to the regional project descriptions, the Florida Forever Work Plan provides system-wide and regional descriptions of land use, water quality, water management practices, physical conditions and other characteristics as required by statutes. The work plan includes a report

on real estate acquisition activity performed in FY 2003 (**Appendix C**). This plan also provides performance measures (**Appendix A**), a listing of Projects eligible for Florida Forever funding (**Appendix B**) and the CERP implementation schedule (**Appendix D**).

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Eligible Florida Forever Projects

CERP PROJECTS

Full Scale Projects

Acme Basin B Discharge
Big Cypress/L-28
Bird Drive Recharge Area
Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands
Broward County Secondary Canal System
Broward County Water Preserve Areas (WPA)
C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir
C-111 Spreader Canal
Caloosahatchee Backpump
Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir, Part 1 & 2
Everglades National Park Seepage Management
Florida Keys Tidal Restoration Flow to NW and Central WCA-3A
Indian River Lagoon – South
Lake Okeechobee Watershed
Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Internal Canal Structures
North Palm Beach County, Part 1
Palm Beach County Agricultural Reserve Reservoir
Site 1 Impoundment
Southern Golden Gates Estates Hydrologic Restoration
Strazzulla Wetlands
WCA 3A/3B
Decomartmentalization and Sheetflow Enhancement, Part 1

WCA -2B Flows to Everglades National Park (ENP)
WPA Conveyance

Pilot Projects

Lake Okeechobee ASR Pilot
Lake Belt In-Ground Reservoir Pilot
Caloosahatchee ASR Pilot
Hillsboro ASR Pilot
L-31N Seepage Management Pilot
Wastewater Reuse Pilot

KISSIMMEE REGION PROJECTS

Kissimmee Basin Water Supply Plan Study
Kissimmee Basin Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) Study
Kissimmee Basin Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) Study
Kissimmee River Restoration Project Study
Kissimmee River Restoration Project
Upper Kissimmee Basin Long-Term Management Plan

SAVE OUR RIVERS PROJECTS

CREW
Henscratch Ranch
Kissimmee River
Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (KCOL)

Lake Marion Creek
Pal-Mar
Reedy Creek

OTHER ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Belle Meade Acquisition Project
Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative Implementation
Biscayne Bay SWIM Plan
Caloosahatchee River Watershed Initiatives
Charlotte Harbor Watershed Initiatives
Estero Bay Watershed
Florida Bay Initiative
Four Corners
Indian River Lagoon (IRL) SWIM Plan
Lake Istokpoga
Lake Okeechobee SWIM Plan
Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative
Lower East Coast Water Supply Plan
Loxahatchee Preservation Initiative
Naples Bay Initiative
Okeechobee County
St. Lucie River Issue Team
Western Basins

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

As required by Section 373.199, F.S., the South Florida Water Management District (District) has completed the annual update of the SFWMD Florida Forever Work Plan. The purpose of the 2004 SFWMD Florida Forever Work Plan is to present projects eligible for funding under the Florida Forever Act (Section 259.105, F.S.), and to report on progress and changes since the January 1, 2003 submission.

The annual report is organized in ten sections and four appendices. The sections provide details on the eight Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Regions and the Kissimmee River Region. In addition, a section of the work plan incorporates several Save Our Rivers (SOR) projects.

To address the work plan informational requirements outlined in the statutes, the regional sections are organized to provide the following information as appropriate: (1) Physical Conditions; (2) Existing Conditions; (3) Water Quality (future without condition); (4) Physical Facilities and Operations (future without condition); (5) Water Quality Problems and Opportunities; (6) Land Use; and (7) brief descriptions of eligible projects. The appendices provide a summary of land acquisitions and management activities; outline performance goals, summarize the list of eligible projects, and present the CERP implementation schedule.

The 2004 SFWMD Florida Forever Work Plan identifies a total of 61 eligible projects (Appendix B). The eligible projects list was updated to incorporate SOR projects and water quality and supply initiatives, plans and studies.

The majority of Florida Forever funds made available to the District will be used to acquire lands. Tables 1 and 2 present a five-year forecast of potential land expenditures for eligible projects.

LEGISLATION (FLORIDA FOREVER AND COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN)

Florida Forever Program

In 1999, the Florida Forever program was created, which authorized the issuance of bonds in an amount not to exceed \$3 billion for acquisitions of land and water areas. This revenue is to be used for the purposes of restoration, conservation, recreation, water resource development, historical preservation and capital improvements to such land and water areas. This program is intended to accomplish environmental restoration, enhance public access and recreational enjoyment, promote long-term management goals and facilitate water resource development.

In addition, the legislation sets forth the criteria for the water management districts to evaluate and recommend projects and financial assistance funding programs to local governments. The provision also provides rulemaking authority to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the water management districts for implementation of the Florida Forever Act.

The Florida Forever Act

The Florida Forever Act was created in Section (s.) 259.105, Florida Statutes (F.S.). The Act provides that bond proceeds are to be distributed annually as follows:

- 35 percent (\$105 million) to the FDEP for land acquisition and capital expenditures in order to implement the priority lists submitted by the water management districts. A minimum of 50 percent of these funds shall be used for the land acquisitions.
- 35 percent (\$105 million) to the FDEP for land acquisition and capital expenditures pursuant to this section. Of these proceeds, a priority is to be given to acquisitions that achieve a combination of conservation goals including protecting Florida's water resources and natural groundwater recharge. Capital expenditures are not to exceed 10 percent of these funds.
- 22 percent (\$72 million) to the Florida Department of Community Affairs (FDCA), to provide grants to local governments through the Florida Communities Trust. From these funds, 8 percent are to be transferred annually to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund for grants awarded under the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program in s. 375.075, F.S.
- 1.5 percent (\$4.5 million) to each of the following: FDEP for the purchase of inholdings and additions to state parks under the jurisdiction of the Division of Recreation and Parks; the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Division of Forestry (DOF) to fund acquisitions and inholdings and additions pursuant to this section, along with reforestation plans or sustainable forestry management; the Florida Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Commission (FWC) to fund acquisitions and inholdings and additions to land to further the conservation of fish and wildlife; the Florida Greenways and Trails Program to acquire greenways and trails, including railroad rights-of-way and the Florida National Scenic Trail.

All lands acquired pursuant to this section are to be used for “multiple-use” purposes. “Multiple-use” includes outdoor recreational activities pursuant to s. 253.034 and s. 259.032(9)(b), F.S., water resource development projects and sustainable forestry management. Water resource or water supply projects may be allowed only if the following specified conditions are met: minimum flows and levels (MFLs) have been established for those waters, which may incur significant harm to water resources, the project complies with permitting requirements and the project is consistent with the regional water supply plan. The entity which vests title in the lands may designate the lands as single use.

Funding under the two 35 percent provisions mentioned above, is contingent upon the project contributing to the achievement of certain specified goals. Out of the first 35 percent (\$105 million) funding provision, the Secretary of FDEP is to ensure that each water management district receives the following percentage of funds: 35 percent (\$36.75 million) to the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District); 25 percent to the Southwest Florida Water Management District; 25 percent to the St. John’s River Water Management District; 7.5 percent to the Suwannee River Water Management District; and 7.5 percent to the Northwest Florida Water Management District. An increased priority will be given to such projects that have secured a cost-sharing agreement allocating for the cleanup of point and non-point sources of pollution.

According to s. 259.105(3) of the Florida Forever Act, the amount is reduced by the costs of issuing and funding reserve accounts and other expenses associated with bonds. The proceeds of the bonds are to be deposited into the Florida Forever Trust Fund. Based on historical patterns associated with the Preservation 2000 (P2000) Program, costs are estimated to be approximately 10 percent.

Under the second 35 percent funding provision mentioned above, the Acquisition Restoration Council (ARC) accepted applications for eligible project proposals beginning July 1, 2000. Project applications are to contain a minimum of two numeric performance measures that relate directly to overall goals and proof that owners within the acquisition area have been notified of their inclusion in the project. ARC was allowed to use existing rules adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIITF), until amendments to those rules are developed to competitively evaluate, select and rank projects for Florida Forever funds pursuant to s. 259.105(3)(b). In developing or amending the rules, the council is to give weight to the criteria included in s. 259.105(10). The TIITF are to review the recommendations and adopt rules necessary for the administration of the process. ARC is to review that year’s approved project lists and by the first board meeting in May, the council is to submit the lists to the TIITF. ARC is also required to submit to the TIITF, with its project list, a report containing certain specified information regarding each project listed.

The TIITF or water management district may authorize the granting of a lease, easement or license for the use of certain lands. Particular uses are to be reviewed by the appropriate board and shall be compatible with resource values and management objectives for the land.

The Florida Forever Act allows the TIITF to allow lands identified or acquired under the program to be managed by a private entity in accordance with a contractual arrangement with the acquiring agency. Funding for these contracts may only originate from the documentary stamp tax revenues deposited into the Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) Trust Fund and the Water Management District Lands Trust Fund.

Save Our Everglades (SOE) Trust Fund

The Save Our Everglades (SOE) Trust Fund is managed by FDEP pursuant to s.373.472. Funds in the trust fund, which serves as a repository for state, local and federal project contributions, is to be expended to finance the implementation of the comprehensive plan, as defined in s. 373.470(2)(a). For each of the nine consecutive years beginning with fiscal year 2001-2002, \$100 million of state funds are to be deposited into the trust fund (\$25 million of which is committed from the Florida Forever program). The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) annual report, submitted jointly by the District and FDEP, describes the funding, expenditures and implementation status of the comprehensive plan.

According to the Everglades Restoration Investment Act (s. 373.470(5)(b)), for each year of the two consecutive years beginning with fiscal year 2000-2001, FDEP is to deposit \$25 million of the funds allocated to the District by FDEP for the purpose of funding Florida Forever projects (s. 259.105(11)) into the SOE Trust Fund.

The Secretary of FDEP is to release monies within thirty days after receipt of a resolution adopted by the District's governing board, which identifies and justifies pre-acquisition costs necessary for the purchase of any lands listed in the District's 5-year work plan. All funds not used for the purposes in the resolution are to be returned to FDEP. Similarly, the Secretary of FDEP is to release acquisition monies to the District after receipt of a resolution adopted by the governing board.

Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)

The Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project was authorized by Congress in 1948 and modified by subsequent acts to provide flood control, water supply, prevention of saltwater intrusion, and protection of fish and wildlife resources. The design of the project was based on forecasts that significantly underestimated the intensity of land uses and future population growth in Central and South Florida. The demands on the system's flood protection and water supply capabilities are now much greater than initially anticipated. In addition, South Florida's natural systems have been degraded by the intensity of land use and water management practices.

In 1994, a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team began to reexamine and determine the feasibility of modifying the C&SF Project to restore the Everglades and the South Florida ecosystem, while providing for the other water-related needs of the region, such as urban and agricultural water supply and flood protection. This process was referred to as the Restudy. In 1999, a comprehensive plan to meet these goals was laid out in the *Central and Southern Florida Project Comprehensive Review Study, Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (USACE and SFWMD, 1999). The plan was approved with the signing of the

Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (WRDA 2000) (Public Law 106-541). WRDA 2000 recognized the comprehensive plan, now referred to as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), as the framework for modifications to the C&SF Project, and requires that implementation be integrated with existing federal and state activities in accordance with WRDA 1996 (Public Law 104-303).

The goals of the CERP are to restore the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water to the Everglades ecosystem. The CERP includes over 50 projects that involve either structural or operational changes to modify the C&SF Project to achieve these goals. Many projects must be implemented before the hydrologic improvements necessary for ecosystem restoration can begin. The timing and distribution of water by the C&SF Project can be altered only after water storage capacity has been increased, along with any necessary water quality improvements. As each of the components to improve the timing and distribution of water are completed, it is expected that the ecosystem will begin to recover.

It is predicted that native flora and fauna, including threatened and endangered species, will rebound as a result of the restoration of hydrologic conditions. It is also predicted that the frequency of water restrictions for agricultural and urban users will be significantly reduced. The ability to sustain the region's natural resources, economy and quality of life depends, to a great extent, on the success of the efforts to enhance, protect and better manage the region's water resources.

Florida Forever Water Management District Work Plan

The requirements for developing the Florida Forever Water Management District Work Plan are contained in s. 373.199, F.S. This provision states that in order to further the goals of the Florida Forever Act, the water management districts are to create a five- year plan, which identifies projects that meet certain criteria.

In developing their project lists, each water management district is to integrate its surface water improvement and management plans, Save Our Rivers (SOR) land acquisition lists, stormwater management projects, proposed water resource development projects, proposed water body restoration projects and other properties or activities that would assist in meeting the goals of Florida Forever.

The districts' lists are to include, where applicable, specific information for each project, according to s. 373.199(4),(5), F.S., including: a description of the water body system; an identification of all governmental agencies having jurisdiction over the water body; a description of the land uses within the project area's drainage basin; a description of strategies for restoring the water body; a listing and synopsis of studies; a description of measures needed to maintain the water body once it has been restored; a schedule for restoration; an estimate of the funding needed to carry out the project; numeric performance measures; a discussion of permitting and regulatory issues; an identification of the proposed public access for projects with land acquisition components; an identification of lands requiring a full fee simple interest and an identification of lands necessary to protect or recharge groundwater. The lists are also to indicate the relative significance of each project, the schedule of activities, the sums of monies earmarked and rankings as much as possible over a five-year planning period.

The initial plan was submitted on June 1, 2001 to the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Secretary of the FDEP. The initial five-year work plan and any subsequent modifications are to be adopted by each water management district after a public hearing, in accordance with s. 373.139(3), F.S. Each district is to provide at least fourteen days advance notice of the hearing date and is to separately notify each county commission, within which, a proposed work plan project, project modification or addition is located of the hearing date.

In the first plan update, due by January 1, 2002, and each year thereafter, the district is to submit a report of acquisitions completed during the year together with modifications or additions to its five-year work plan. The plans are to also include the status of funding, staffing and resource management for every project funded under the Florida Preservation 2000 Act, the Florida Forever Act and the Water Management Lands Trust Fund (s. 259.101, 259.105 and s. 373.59, F.S.), for which the district is responsible. Also included in the report is a description of land management activity for each project owned by the district. The Secretary is to submit this report along with the ARC project list as required under s. 259.105, F.S.

The District's Florida Forever Work Plan is centered on the ten volume, 4,033 page Comprehensive Review Study, as approximately 75 percent of the Florida Forever funding the District will receive in order to accomplish its priority list, has been allocated by the Everglades Restoration Investment Act to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The work plan document is arranged in sections providing detail on each of the following regions that comprise the nearly 18,000 square miles of the study area:

1. Kissimmee River Region
2. Lake Okeechobee Region
3. Lower West Coast Region
4. Upper East Coast Region
5. Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Region
6. Everglades, Florida Bay and Keys Region
7. Water Preserve Areas Region
8. North Palm Beach County Region
9. Miami-Dade County Region

Note that the Kissimmee River Region is not a CERP region; however, it is included as a region because of the significance of the Kissimmee River Restoration project.

The work plan addresses the information requirements listed in the statute for the District's project list, primarily by study region. The Comprehensive Plan describes this information through applicable subsections described by the following:

1. Physical Condition
2. Existing Conditions
3. Water Quality (future without condition)
4. Physical Facilities and Operations (future without condition)

5. Water Quality Problems and Opportunities
6. Land Use

The work plan briefly describes specific projects that will be eligible for Florida Forever funding in the fiscal year (FY) 2004 -2008 period. In addition, references and available websites are provided for additional information on prior studies, initiatives, reports, projects, implementation and financial schedules.

Table 1 summarizes estimated District real estate expenditures for FY 2004 - 2008 based on a real estate acquisition strategy, developed to support the CERP implementation schedule (Refer to Appendix D for the July 2001 CERP implementation schedule). Only real estate costs are presented in **Table 1**, because during the timeframe the District anticipates the majority of Save Our Everglades (SOE) Trust Fund resources will be used to support real estate acquisitions. The estimated total real estate expenditures for CERP projects in the five-year period is **\$1,057,900,866**.

Table 1. Five-Year Florida Forever Water Management District Work Plan Expenditures for CERP projects.

Project	Cost (FY2004-FY2008)
Acme Basin B	\$4,380,170
Big Cypress/L-28 Modifications	\$2,093,750
Bird Drive Recharge Area	\$51,982,956
Biscayne Bay Wetlands	\$161,433,212
Broward County Secondary Canals	\$1,920,000
Broward County WPA	\$28,472,830
C-111 Spreader Canal	\$32,427,696
C-43 Reservoir	\$43,604,390
Caloosahatchee Backpumping	\$2,562,583
Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir, Part 2	\$31,249,111
Everglades National Park Seepage Management	\$2,630,667
Florida Keys Tidal Restoration	\$51,000
Indian River Lagoon	\$262,969,355
Lake Okeechobee Watershed	\$196,036,333
LNWR Internal Canal Structures	\$345,000
North Palm Beach County Project, Part 1	\$179,354,698
Palm Beach County Agriculture Reserve Reservoir, Part 1	\$13,610,580
Site 1 Impoundment	\$85,000
Southern Golden Gate Estates	\$0
Strazzulla Wetlands	\$6,857,535
Wastewater Reuse Pilot	\$1,600,000
WCA 3 Decompartmentalization, Part 1	\$18,164,000
WPA Conveyance	\$16,070,000
TOTAL	\$1,057,900,866

The \$25 million annual contribution of Florida Forever funds, while a significant contribution, will not be the only source of funds use to implement CERP. Other funding sources to support real estate acquisition include, special state appropriations, CARL funds and credits for lands owned by local governments or purchased using local government funds. District ad valorem funds will support both real estate and non- real estate funding obligations.

Table 2 summarizes the estimated Five – Year (FY 2004 – 2008) District real estate expenditures for other eligible projects. The total estimate of \$34,463,000 is projected to be expended in FY2004.

Table 2. Estimated Five-Year SFWMD Real Estate Expenditures for Other Projects.

Project	Cost (FY2004-FY2008)
Hen Scratch Ranch	\$5,800,000
Kissimmee River Restoration	\$26,063,000
L-31 North	\$2,600,000
TOTAL	\$34,463,000

Table 2 (con't). Estimated Five-Year SFWMD Real Estate Expenditures for Other Projects.

SFMWD Florida Forever Work Plan Fiscal Years 2004-2008		
Project Title	2004	2004 - 2008
Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Projects		
Upper East Coast Region		
Indian River Lagoon Project		
Lake Okeechobee Watershed Region		
Lake Okeechobee Watershed		
Everglades Agricultural Area		
Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir, Part 2		
Everglades, Florida Bay, Florida Keys Region		
Everglades National Park Seepage Management		
Florida Keys Tidal Restoration		
WCA-3 Decompartmentalization, Part 1		
C-111 Spreader Canal		
Water Preserve Areas Region		
Site 1 Impoundment		
Acme Basin B		
Broward County WPA		
Strazulla Wetlands		
Broward County Secondary Canals		
WPA Conveyance		
Palm Beach County Agriculture Reserve Reservoir, Part 1		
North Palm Beach County Region		
North Palm Beach County Project, Part 1		
LNWR Internal Canal Structures		
Lower West Coast Region		
C-43 Reservoir		
Big Cypress/L-28 Interceptor		
Caloosahatchee Backpumping		
Southern Golden Gate Estates		
Miami-Dade County Region		
Bird Drive Recharge Area		
Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands		
Waster Water Resue Pilot		
Priority 1 - CERP Totals	\$25,000,000	\$1,057,900,866
Water Body Restoration Projects		
Kissimmee River Region & SOR Projects		
Kissimmee River Restoration	\$8,075,000	\$26,063,000
SOR Projects		\$8,400,000
Priority 2 - Restoration Totals	\$8,075,000	\$34,463,000
FLORIDA FOREVER TOTALS	\$33,075,000	\$1,092,363,866

FLORIDA FOREVER PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The water management districts were mandated with jointly providing a report by December 15, 2000 to the Secretary of the FDEP, which established goals and performance measures that were to be used to analyze activities under s. 259.105(3)(a). In accordance with s. 373.1995, F.S., the Secretary forwarded the report for approval to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIITF), the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, prior to the beginning of the 2001 regular legislative session. The legislature had the opportunity to reject, modify or take no action regarding the goals and performance measures established by the report. If no action was taken, the goals and performance measures reflected in the report were to be implemented. On December 1, 2000, the districts jointly submitted their Florida Forever Goals and Performance Measures to Secretary Struhs. The goals and performance measures were developed in collaboration with the Florida Forever Advisory Council (FFAC).

The 1999 legislature created the FFAC. The council is composed of seven citizens appointed by the Governor and two ad hoc members of the legislature. Pursuant to s. 259.0345(7), the FFAC submitted a report which was similar to the requirements of the water management districts' report, but was limited in respect to the funding provided under s. 259.105(3)(b), which comprises the 35 percent of each bond issue provided to FDEP for its primary acquisition program.

In the report, the FFAC has grouped the 19 statutory goals into seven objectives and has created one new objective, i.e., Increase the Amount of Open Space Available in Urban Areas. For each objective, several performance measures have been created. The objectives and performance measures were reviewed and discussed by the Senate Natural Resources Committee. The members took no action to revise or reject the FFAC's recommendations.

Although the recommended objectives are very similar to the goals set out in s. 259.105(4), the recommended performance measures differ substantially from the statutory performance measures. Pursuant to s. 259.0345(7), if the legislature fails to take action regarding the FFAC's recommendations, they shall be implemented. In the event that takes place, there would be confusion as to which goals/objectives and performance measures would govern the majority of the program. Accordingly, the FFAC's recommendations are implemented in Senate Bill (S.B.) 1468 of the 2001 legislature, which also repeals the existing goals and performance measures. It should be noted that the FFAC's recommendations, if not altered by the legislature, become effective, but only to guide the FDEP's primary acquisition program. However, if enacted in the Florida Statutes - as was the case, the goals and performance measures apply to both the FDEP and water management districts. The goals and performance measures are included in **Appendix A**.

PROJECT RANKINGS, SCHEDULE AND RESOURCES

Funding and Manpower Resources

The cost to implement the current schedule falls within the revenues expected under the Comprehensive Plan funding legislation adopted by the legislature. This legislation proposes

specific amounts from a variety of sources to fund the plan. The USACE funding for implementing the plan will be obtained through the federal budgeting and appropriations process on an annual basis and will be coordinated with what is being made available in Florida. It is anticipated that adequate manpower resources, both at the USACE and the SFWMD, will be available at planned funding levels.

Implementation Schedule

The Comprehensive Plan is conceptual in nature, consequently any schedule that is developed from that plan will also be conceptual. When the Comprehensive Plan was sent to Congress in 1999 it contained an implementation schedule that was, at the time, the best professional judgment of the Implementation Plan Team as to how the plan could be implemented. In 2000, the Implementation Plan Team began to revise the schedule to take into account new information regarding the projects, the available funding and the nature of the SFWMD-USACE working relationship.

The Implementation Plan Team released a revised implementation schedule in July of 2001 known as UPDATE 1.0. UPDATE 1.0 of the Implementation Schedule as depicted in **Appendix D** can best be thought of as a master sequencing of the projects. Currently, the Implementation Plan Team is looking at the schedule once again. Changes that are likely to affect the schedule may include, but are not limited to, changes in funding levels, changes in performance targets for some projects and changes in planned locations for some projects. The schedule will be continually monitored to ensure that the proposed dates are both realistic and are being achieved.

Chapter 2

REGIONAL STUDY AREA

The study area encompasses approximately 18,000 square miles from Orlando to the Florida Reef Tract with at least 11 major physiographic provinces: Everglades, Big Cypress, Lake Okeechobee, Florida Bay, Biscayne Bay, Florida Reef Tract, nearshore coastal waters, Atlantic Coastal Ridge, Florida Keys, Immokalee Rise and the Kissimmee River Valley. The Kissimmee River, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades are the dominant watersheds that connect a mosaic of wetlands, uplands, coastal areas and marine areas. The study area includes all or part of the following 16 counties: Monroe, Miami- Dade, Broward, Collier, Palm Beach, Hendry, Martin, St. Lucie, Glades, Lee, Charlotte, Highlands, Okeechobee, Osceola, Orange and Polk.

The Central and Southern Florida Project (C&SF) Project, which was first authorized by Congress in 1948, is a multipurpose project that provides flood control; water supply for municipal, industrial and agricultural uses; prevention of saltwater intrusion; water supply for Everglades National Park (ENP) and protection of fish and wildlife resources throughout the study area. The primary system includes about 1,000 miles each of levees and canals, 150 water control structures and 16 major pump stations. The C&SF Project study area, including Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects, is shown on **Figure 1**.

The Upper St. Johns River Basin has been excluded from this study because it is a separate hydrologic basin, which is not a part of the Everglades and South Florida ecosystems.

The following sections provide details on each of the regions that comprise this large study area. The CERP Guidance Memorandum 012.00 defines the following set of regions:

1. Kissimmee River Region
2. Lake Okeechobee Region
3. Lower West Coast Region
4. Upper East Coast Region
5. Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Region
6. Everglades, Florida Bay and Keys Region
7. Water Preserve Areas Region
8. North Palm Beach County Region
9. Miami-Dade County Region

Note that the Kissimmee River Region is not a CERP region. It is included here because of the significance of the Kissimmee River Restoration project and the legislative relationship between the project and the Florida Forever Program.

Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Projects

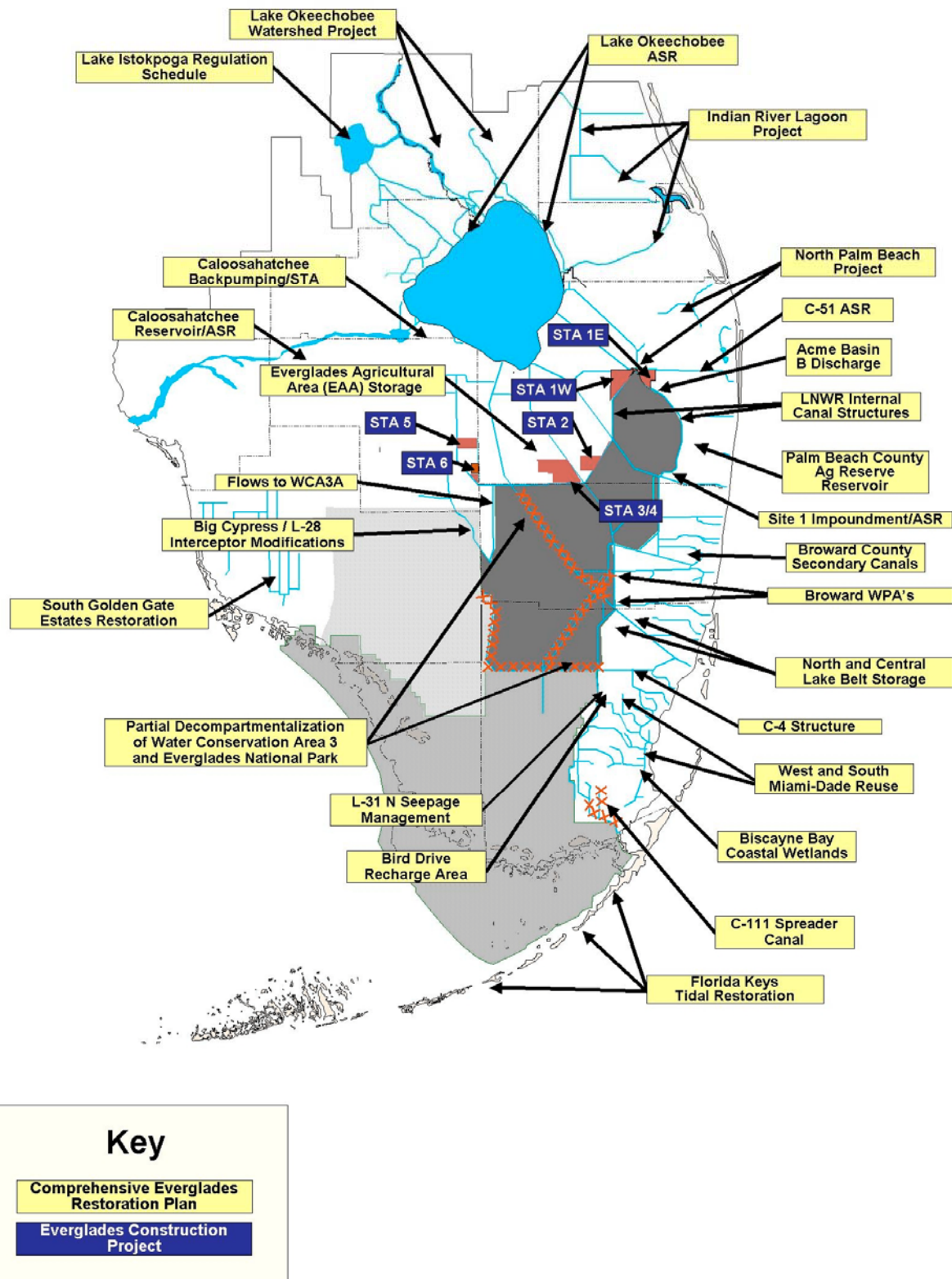


Figure 1. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project Plan Area.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN FLORIDA FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT (PROJECT MODIFICATIONS)

The C&SF Project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1948 and modified by subsequent acts, as a plan for improvement of flood control, drainage and other purposes covering a 18,000 square mile area of both Central and South Florida. A number of efforts are currently underway by the USACE to modify the project for environmental improvement. The chapters that follow list these and other projects.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Many of the regulatory and environmental restoration programs, which are assumed to be in place in 2050, are projected to result in a net improvement in water quality in South Florida. In addition to those assumptions, water quality improvement actions undertaken to comply with the requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act, (Public Law 92-500), are expected to result in improvements in regional water quality necessary to comply with state, tribal and local water quality standards. These water quality improvement actions are implemented by: the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA); the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP); the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District); the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes and local governments. Examples of these programs include: Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) and other National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) point and nonpoint source pollution reduction permitting requirements, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) established under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 92-500) and Pollutant Load Reduction Goals (PLRGs) established pursuant to the state of Florida's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Act for designated priority water bodies (Section 373.451–459, Florida Statutes).

From a regional perspective, the most comprehensive of these programs is the TMDL program implemented by FDEP and the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes. Under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, states and tribes are required to identify water bodies within their jurisdictions not meeting water quality standards and rank those water bodies in terms of the severity of the pollution and designated and actual uses of the water bodies. The 303(d)-listed water bodies are to be reported to the USEPA in accordance with Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act. TMDLs are to be developed for 303(d)-listed water bodies consistent with the priority ranking, and are to be established “at a level necessary to implement the applicable water quality standards with seasonal variations and a margin of safety which takes into account any lack of knowledge concerning the relationship between effluent limitations and water quality.”

In its 2000 report to the USEPA, FDEP identified impaired water bodies in the study area in accordance with the requirements of Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act. FDEP has developed a strategy for assessing watersheds (basins) and developing TMDLs and remediation plans for pollutants causing impairment of 303(d)- listed water bodies (FDEP, 1996a and FDEP, 1996b). It should be noted that excessive nutrient loads were typically identified as the most

common pollutant causing impairment. FDEP's statewide strategy for implementing TMDLs involves five-year cycles for basin assessment, monitoring, data analysis and TMDL development, development of basin management plans and implementation of basin management plans. Several key water bodies in South Florida will receive priority for TMDL development, including Lake Okeechobee and the Indian River Lagoon (IRL).

Development and implementation of TMDLs is an essential step for achieving overall ecosystem restoration in South Florida. Water quality restoration targets are necessary for detailed design of Restudy recommended plan components to achieve water quality restoration performance objectives. Further, implementation of basin management plans developed under the TMDL program is necessary to achieve ecological restoration in watersheds "downstream" of recommended plan components.

The triennial review of state and tribal water quality standards performed under Section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act is another essential step for achieving ecosystem restoration in South Florida. States and tribes are required to periodically review their water quality standards to ensure that standards are adequate to protect designated uses of waters. Within the study area, there are no specific numeric water quality criteria for many pollutants (e.g., nutrients and several pesticides) detected in ongoing water quality monitoring activities. The extent of the contribution of such pollutants to overall "impairment" levels in 303(d)-listed water bodies is also unknown. As part of the triennial review process, FDEP and the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes may propose modifications to existing water quality criteria and propose additional water quality criteria (as appropriate) to protect water resources. Modified and additional water quality criteria should be integrated with future detailed planning and design activities to assure that restoration plan components are operated consistent with water quality restoration targets.

The SFWMD is also developing pollution load reduction goals (PLRGs) for SWIM-listed water bodies. In South Florida, SWIM-listed water bodies include Lake Okeechobee, the IRL and Biscayne Bay. PLRGs are similar to TMDLs in that numeric water quality targets are promulgated and remediation programs are developed. TMDLs and PLRGs are essential water quality restoration targets to be integrated into future detailed planning and design activities for restoration plan components during the implementation period.

The following chapters summarize projected water quality problems and opportunities in study area subregions. Accurately projecting future water quality conditions in the study area is difficult, due to its vast scope, uncertainty in future growth and land use changes, and in part to the lack of comprehensive water quality data indicative of statistically reliable trends (FDEP, 1996a). The following subsections predict water quality changes expected to occur within each of the CERP regions based on current water quality data and descriptions of existing conditions, available trend data, future population growth projections and the assumed implementation of certain specific regulatory and environmental restoration and water supply projects. Actual improvements in water quality conditions, where projected to occur, depend in large degree upon the successful implementation of the programs and projects included in the future without plan assumptions. For mercury, conditions are projected for the regional system as a whole.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - MERCURY

There is much uncertainty about the sources of mercury in South Florida and the Everglades marsh mercury cycling processes that control mercury bioaccumulation. Controlling mercury contamination of the Everglades ecosystem depends on actions that are beyond the scope of the CERP. The major external source of mercury for the Everglades ecosystem is atmospheric deposition. Some estimate that a high percentage of the mercury deposited into the Everglades could be contributed from local atmospheric emission sources in the urban area (Dvonch, 1998). Others estimate that most of the mercury deposited on the Everglades originates from outside Florida. Research indicates that mercury deposition rates in portions of North America have greatly increased since the turn of the century (Swain, et. al., 1992). Some of this historically accumulated mercury is being recycled by the ecosystem; however, this historical mercury could also be buried beneath the recycling zone by accumulating peat if new sources are shut off.

The effect of this burial process hypothesis has been estimated with a mercury cycling model (Ambrose et al., in press). The model predicts that as little as a 50 percent reduction in atmospheric mercury deposition over the next 50 years (2050) will decrease methylmercury concentrations in Everglades water and fish. Recent and potential future regulatory emission controls may be needed to reduce the atmospheric loading to the system from local sources; however, the significant global atmospheric mercury component is much more difficult to control and will require international agreements.

If control of atmospheric mercury deposition can be affected by decreasing local emission sources in concert with the implementation of the 44,000 acres of stormwater treatment areas (STAs) constructed as part of the Everglades Construction Project (ECP), additional benefits may accrue. However, the complex interactive modeling predictions have not yet been done. The long-term efficiency of the STAs in removing phosphorus and other water quality constituents is presently uncertain, as is the effect of these water quality changes on mercury cycling downstream. Among the key factors that are thought to influence mercury cycling within the Everglades are complex interrelationships involving phosphorus, sulfur, oxygen, carbon, periphyton, peat accretion and sediment redox conditions. There is no scientific consensus as to which of these factors will dominate, and whether the driving factors will be the same throughout all portions of the 4,000 square mile Everglades ecosystem. Given the 80 percent reduction in total phosphorus obtained in the Everglades Nutrient Removal Project during the early years of operation, it is possible that a decrease in the methylation of mercury could occur downstream due to the declining nutrient concentrations to the marsh and the reduced stimulation of both producers and decomposers. However, it is unclear what effect changes in sulfur forms will have on mercury methylation, and which influence will dominate.

LAND USE

The existing use of land within the study boundaries varies widely from agriculture to high-density multifamily and industrial urban uses. A large portion of South Florida remains natural, although much of it is disturbed land. The dominant natural features are the federally protected ENP and Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) at the southernmost tip of the peninsula, Lake Okeechobee and the state protected WCAs in the westernmost reaches of the Lower East Coast

counties. Generally, urban development is concentrated along the Lower East Coast from Palm Beach County to Miami-Dade County, in the Central Florida/Orlando area and on the Lower West Coast from Fort Myers to Naples.

Most of the interior of the study area is in agricultural use, which includes sugarcane (the dominant crop) and vegetable farms in the EAA of western Palm Beach County and Hendry County; the Agricultural Reserve Area of Palm Beach County; and the south Miami-Dade agricultural area where vegetable crops dominate, especially tropical varieties. There are citrus groves in every county, but citrus is concentrated in St. Lucie and Martin counties on the east coast and Hendry, Highlands, Collier and Glades counties on the west. Cattle and dairy farms predominate in Glades, Highlands and Okeechobee counties.

In the northern portion of the system, around Orlando, tourism and its attendant service-oriented land uses (for example, hotels, motels, convenience stores and souvenir shops) make up a significant portion of the landscape. Agriculture, however, continues to play an important role in the region, with over two million acres being farmed, half of which is pasture land. The area surrounding Lake Okeechobee is largely rural, with agriculture the prevailing land use. There are over 580,000 acres of irrigated farmland in the EAA (B. Boyd, pers. comm.). Farm products produced there include sugarcane, the predominant crop, rice, row crops and sod. There is also extensive pasture land both west and north of the lake. Directly south of the EAA lie the WCAs. The conservation areas cover 1,372 square miles and consist mainly of sawgrass marshes and tree islands. The 1948 C&SF Project created the WCAs for the conservation of water supplies for the Lower East Coast.

The Upper East Coast is comprised of St. Lucie and Martin counties; the landscape is dominated by agricultural uses. Significant natural resources, the St. Lucie Estuary and IRL, are also contained within this area. Urban land use, which makes up 17 percent of the Upper East Coast, is mainly concentrated along the seaboard coastal and lagoon shorelines. The Lower East Coast extends approximately 100 miles through the coastal portions of Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Being the most densely populated area in the state, the Lower East Coast is home to one third of the state's population, more than 4.5 million people. The area is primarily an urban megalopolis, but it also contains substantial agricultural acreage, particularly in southwestern Miami-Dade County (90,000 acres) and western Palm Beach County (29,000 acres). Rapid population growth and land development practices have resulted in notable western urban sprawl; the predominant land use is single-family residential. The once significant rural population in the western areas of the counties, especially in Miami-Dade and Broward, has practically disappeared, resulting in an urbanized makeup in population. Palm Beach County is not far behind.

The Florida Keys are made up of over 1,700 islands that encompass approximately 100 square miles and includes the largest reef system in the United States. While a majority of the county is designated as conservation land, due to the land falling within ENP, BCNP or the National Key Deer Refuge, land use is primarily either residential or geared towards supporting the region's main industry, tourism. The county's fragile natural resources and vulnerability caused the state of Florida to designate the area as an Area of Critical State Concern in 1975; such designation is intended to protect such resources from degradation by strictly regulating development.

The southwestern counties of Collier and Lee are the fastest growing in terms of population in the state. Population growth is mainly due to the immigration of retirees, not a high birthrate. The coast has become highly urbanized, with development spreading eastward into agricultural and natural lands. Agriculture is however, a major industry, especially in Lee County where citrus predominates.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of the Restudy was to reexamine the C&SF Project to determine the feasibility of structural or operational modifications to the project essential to the restoration of the Everglades and the South Florida ecosystem, while providing for other water-related needs, such as urban and agricultural water supply and flood protection in those areas served by the project. The intent of the study was to evaluate conditions within the study area and make recommendations to modify the project to restore important functions and values of the Everglades and South Florida ecosystem and plan for the water resources needs of the people of South Florida for the next 50 years.

STUDY SCOPE

The purpose of the Restudy was to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the overall regional C&SF system and the tools necessary to evaluate the Comprehensive Plan, as well as separable and incremental portions of the project. This study represents the first thorough, systemwide update since the project's original inception. The Comprehensive Plan includes such features as are necessary to provide for the regional water-related needs of the region; including flood control, the enhancement of water supplies and other objectives served by the C&SF Project. This feasibility study included hydrologic modeling, environmental modeling, water quality analyses and water supply studies that refined the information developed in the reconnaissance study. The feasibility study was conducted to identify a Comprehensive Plan for the C&SF Project and an adaptive implementation and operational strategy based on monitoring, evaluation and modeling.

The Comprehensive Plan presented in this report is similar in scope to that contained in the 1948 Comprehensive Report for the C&SF Project (House Document 80- 643). This feasibility report does not include the standard level of detail that is expected from much smaller projects, such as the identification of specific sites for proposed project facilities. The Comprehensive Plan identifies components needed to restore the South Florida ecosystem, which includes the needs of all users, and the formulation process that produced them from the viewpoint of hydrologic impacts of the regional water management system. This report also documents the uncertainties in plan selection and future tasks that will be needed to minimize these uncertainties. Engineering and real estate cost estimates are based on the analyses and assumptions made during the process of formulating and developing the components of the Comprehensive Plan. Uncertainties in design details and uncertainties in the exact location of components could impact future alternative analyses and subsequent design and cost estimates.

OTHER STUDIES

There are a number of ongoing studies being conducted by the USACE and other agencies that may contribute to restoration of the South Florida ecosystem. Some of the major efforts are discussed in this section.

The USACE is currently conducting a feasibility study of Biscayne Bay in order to investigate effects on water circulation, biological communities and water quality of dredging and filling, spoil islands and freshwater inputs in northern Biscayne Bay from existing federal canals. The study would propose solutions to alleviate adverse factors affecting the bay and help to develop guidelines for future management of Biscayne Bay's natural resources. The nonfederal sponsor is Miami-Dade County.

The South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force observed that the restoration effort needed to be founded on scientific information and mandated that it take an ecosystem approach. In support of this effort, the Science Subgroup completed a report in 1996 entitled South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Scientific Information Needs (Science Subgroup, 1996), which provides information in support of the ecosystem approach. It was the first step in the development of an ecosystem-based South Florida Comprehensive Science Plan that includes monitoring and modeling. The Science Coordination Team (formerly the Science Subgroup) is in the process of developing a series of white papers on key science issues in South Florida. Various agencies, including elements of the U.S. Department of the Interior (USDOI) and the SFWMD are developing several science plans to supply the information needs for ecosystem restoration.

The science plan developed by the Florida Bay Interagency Working Group, initiated by ENP in January 1993, focused upon the research, monitoring and modeling objectives that must be addressed to guide the restoration of Florida Bay. It represents a synthesis of research plans prepared over past years by several federal and state agencies.

The SFWMD has undertaken the development of regional and subregional level water supply plans to provide for better management of South Florida's water resources. The Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan was completed in April 2000 (SFWMD, 2000). The Lower East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan, which addresses water-related needs and concerns of southeastern Florida through the year 2020 was completed in April 2000 (SFWMD, 2000). The Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan (SFWMD, 1998b), which evaluates future 2020 water demands and supplies for the Upper East Coast of Florida was completed in 1998.

PERMITS AND AUTHORIZATIONS

The timely processing and approval of permits and other regulatory authorizations is critical to completing design and construction on schedule and being able to operate a project once construction has been completed. To ensure that all required authorizations are processed and approved in a coordinated and timely manner, the USACE and SFWMD project managers will include staff, as necessary, from their respective regulatory/permitting organizations and a representative from the FDEP on CERP implementation teams.

The USACE and the SFWMD project managers will maintain close communication and coordination to identify and address any required permit or water quality certification applications and negotiations, as well as any conditions included in these authorizations. Where appropriate, final conditions on a permit or authorization, will be approved by both the USACE and the SFWMD project managers prior to issuance of a draft permit or certification.

INTERIM LAND MANAGEMENT

The SFWMD Interim Property Management Program is responsible for managing those properties acquired by the SFWMD for future CERP and other projects until such time as the land is needed for construction.

The goals of the Interim Property Management Program are to:

- Protect the natural resource
- Provide on-site management and security for SFWMD owned lands at a minimal cost
- Minimize SFWMD expenses by increasing revenue from non- governmental sources to off-set management, maintenance and resource protection costs
- Generate additional funding for future acquisition
- Minimize impacts to the local agricultural economy by keeping viable agricultural lands in active production for as long as possible
- Minimize fiscal impacts to the local government by keeping lands on the tax roll until they are actually needed for construction

Where appropriate, historical uses of properties, such as grazing, sod, vegetable and sugar cane farming, and nurseries and tree farms, are allowed to continue through the use of reservations, leases or similar agreements. Generally, a competitive bid process is used to solicit proposals and award contracts, which include appropriate cancellation clauses so the land can be quickly made available when it is needed. In some cases, short term leases (5 years or less) are negotiated as part of the acquisition package. Lessees are typically required to actively manage the property, control exotics, provide security for the property, implement applicable best management practices, keep the property and facilities in good repair and condition, obtain all required permits and approvals for their activities, maintain required insurance coverage and pay applicable taxes.

For those lands in their natural state and/or where some type of active interim use is inappropriate, due to the environmental sensitivity of the land, and/or the projected construction timetable for the project, the SFWMD either manages the lands or contracts with another governmental entity to have the lands managed. The SFWMD conducts regular inspections of all its properties on a semi-annual basis. Arrangements are made for exotic control, cleanup, security or other activities as needed.

Chapter 3

KISSIMMEE REGION

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS - KISSIMMEE REGION

The Kissimmee Region is 3,000 square miles in size and extends from Orlando southward to Lake Okeechobee (**Figure 2**). The watershed, which is the largest source of surface water to Lake Okeechobee, is comprised of the Upper Kissimmee and Kissimmee River basins.

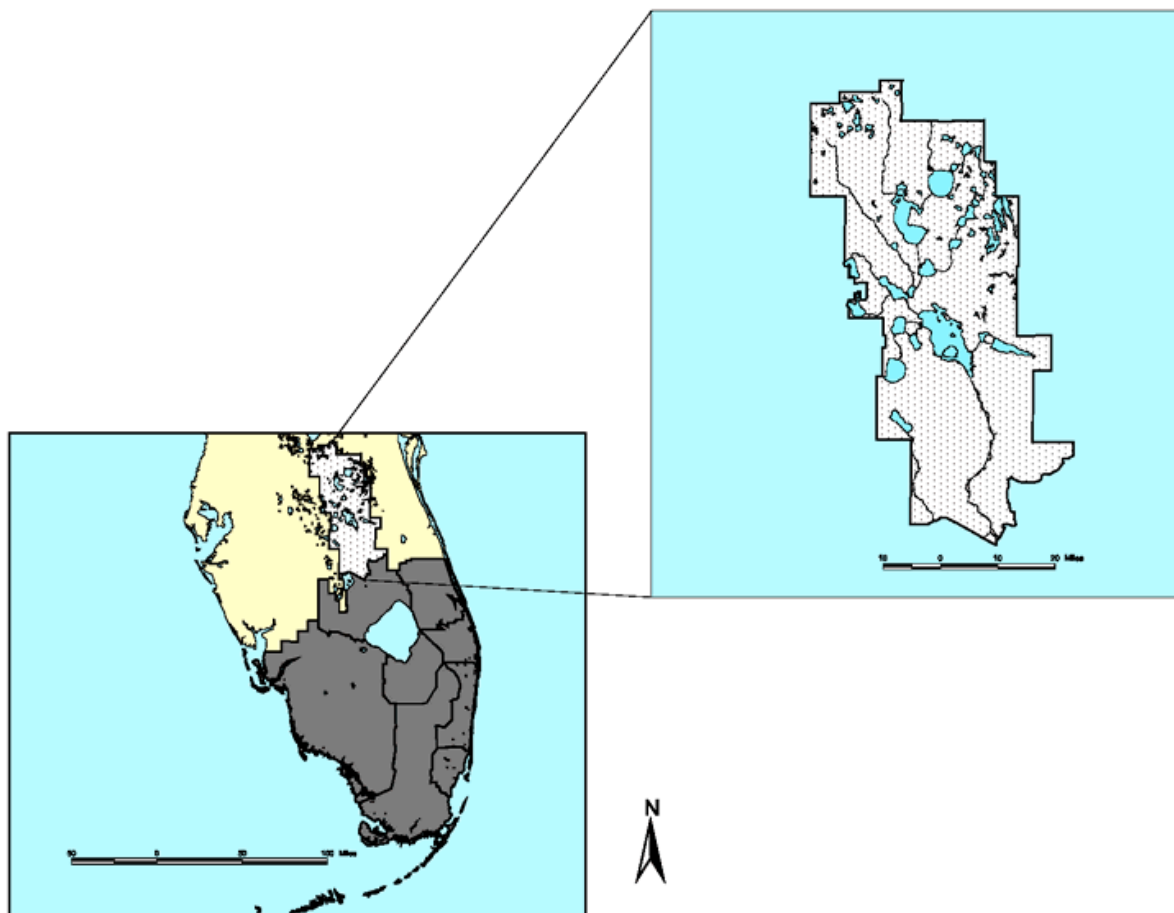


Figure 2. Kissimmee Region.

The Kissimmee Watershed follows the area's topography and is similar in size to the Region, covering approximately 3,000 square miles of south- central Florida and is the largest watershed providing surface water to Lake Okeechobee (**Figure 3**). The name "Kissimmee" is derived from a Calusa Indian word that means "long water". The Kissimmee Watershed covers Orange, Osceola, Polk, Highlands and Okeechobee counties. It is divided into two parts:

1. The Upper Basin, which covers 1,633 square miles includes Lake Kissimmee and the East and West chain of lakes areas in Orange and Osceola counties.
2. The Kissimmee River Basin covers 758 square miles, which includes the tributary watershed of the Kissimmee River between the outlet of Lake Kissimmee and Lake Okeechobee.

The watershed is located between the city of Orlando and Lake Okeechobee. Lake Okeechobee is the major source of freshwater to the residents of South Florida (**Figure 4**). The watershed is about 105 miles long and has a maximum width of 35 miles.



Figure 3. Kissimmee Watershed Map.

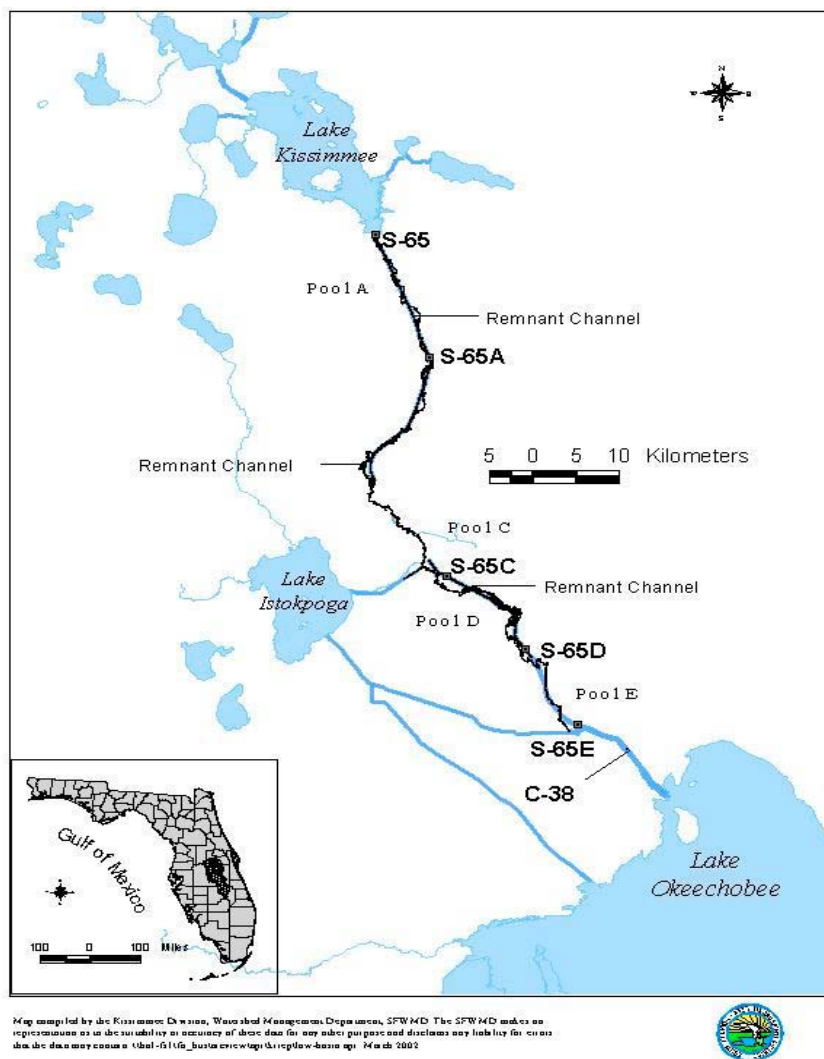


Figure 4. Kissimmee River Location Map.

Lakes are a significant feature in the Upper Kissimmee Basin. Major water bodies in the Upper Kissimmee Basin include Alligator Lake, Lake Gentry, Lake Cypress, Lake Myrtle, Lake Hart, East Lake Tohopekaliga, Lake Tohopekaliga, Lake Hatchineha, Lake Marian, Lake Weohyakapka, and Lake Kissimmee. Many of the lakes' water levels are managed by a water control structure and canals that convey water from one lake to another, thus forming a "chain of lakes." All of the major lakes in this basin are shallow, with mean depths varying from six to 13 feet.

Project works in the basin for flood control and navigation were constructed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as part of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project (C&SF Project). Upper Basin works consist of channels and structures that control water flows through 18 natural lakes into Lake Kissimmee. The Kissimmee River Basin includes the channelized Kissimmee River (C-38) as a 56-mile canal extending from Lake Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee and a series of four water control structures along C-38.

The Upper Kissimmee Basin is 1,633 square miles and includes Lake Kissimmee and the east and west Chain of Lakes region in Orange and Osceola counties. A 758 square mile Kissimmee River Basin includes the tributary watersheds of the Kissimmee River. Sub-basins within the Kissimmee River Basin are sometimes referred to by the downstream water control structure. For example, the sub-basin between structures 65 and 65A is called the Pool A basin. “Pool” refers to the fact that the water control structures “pool” or impound the water behind it in a reservoir fashion. The 622 square mile Lake Istokpoga basin also provides tributary inflow to the Kissimmee River Basin.

Approximately 50 tributaries provide inflow into the Kissimmee River Basin. Relatively constricted central channels characterize these tributaries with pasture lands usually extending along the channel. Most channels are covered with vegetation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - KISSIMMEE REGION WATER MANAGEMENT

The system of water control works now in place in the Kissimmee Watershed has been modified from the general C&SF Project plan outlined in the 1948 report to Congress and authorized for construction in 1954. The modifications are associated with the first phase of construction for the Kissimmee River Restoration (KRR) Project completed in February 2001. These modifications were authorized by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act of 1992. The original project was designed to provide flood damage prevention for 30 percent of the standard project flood (SPF). This equates to protection against a five-year flood event. Project modifications associated with the KRR Project maintain these same levels of flood protection. Water levels within the basin are controlled by a complex system of canals and control structures that are managed by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District) in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Army.

Channels connect the major lakes of the Upper Basin. Most of the channels were excavated by private interests in the 1900's and subsequently enlarged to varying degrees by the congressionally authorized C&SF Project plan. Additional operation and maintenance dredging and canal widening are associated with the KRR project. The first phase of this work was completed in August 2002. The remainder will be completed in 2005.

Nine control structures regulate water levels and flows in the lake system. For more details on the C&SF flood control project refer to the USACE Kissimmee River, Florida - Final Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (1985). Operational criteria for both basins can be found in the Master Water Control Manual for the Kissimmee River-Lake Istokpoga Basin (1994). These operational criteria have been modified for the KRR project to include an interim regulation schedule for the S-65 structure. This interim schedule was put in place in June 2001 and will remain in effect until a new regulation schedule is put into place for the KRR project. Details regarding regulation schedules for S-65 can be found in the Headwaters Revitalization Plan (1996). From time to time, operations may temporarily deviate from the water control plan. These temporary deviations may be conducted for various purposes, such as control of nuisance aquatic vegetation, lake drawdowns or construction.

Prior to the project, lake outlets within the Upper Basin had been dredged for drainage and navigation, but were uncontrolled. Dredged outlets did not provide adequate flood control and the Upper Basin did not have enough outlet or conveyance capacity to remove flood waters within a reasonable timeframe to avoid flood impacts.

To provide adequate outlet capacity from the Upper Basin, approximately 15 miles of canal were required immediately downstream of Lake Kissimmee. The length is a function of canal size, the size of the Lake Kissimmee outlet structure size (S-65) and the very flat terrain immediately downstream of the lake.

An earlier project, the Herbert Hoover Dike, around Lake Okeechobee modified the original lower end of the Kissimmee River with a borrow canal immediately upstream of Lake Okeechobee. This 8-mile section of canal, known as Government Cut, was modified and enlarged during construction of the C-38 and is inside the Lake Okeechobee containment levee. This section of canal diverted flow from a downstream portion of the Kissimmee River, creating an isolated remnant of the river known as Paradise Run. Paradise Run, immediately west of Government Cut, retains most of its original topography; however, diversion of natural flows has lowered water levels and former wetland areas have been converted to grazing and pasture land.

Between the outlet channel at the upper end of the Kissimmee River (C-38) and Government Cut at the lower end was a section of river and floodplain known as the central reach. This stretch was approximately 33 miles in length and also provided flood control. During the design phase of the C&SF project, some consideration was given to nonstructural approaches (e.g., levee the uplands from the floodplain); however, channelization was determined to be the most cost effective solution. Combined with Government Cut, the new canal (C-38) provided complete channelization of the entire 56- mile river-floodplain system from Lake Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee.

The natural fall of the land from Lake Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee is about 36 feet. Construction of the C-38 canal included construction of six water control structures (S-65, S-65A, S-65B, S-65C, S-65D, S-65E). These structures were distributed from north to south and formed a series of five independent water bodies called pools (Pools A, B, C, D and E). The northernmost structure, S-65, is located at the southernmost end of Lake Kissimmee. The southernmost structure is located just north of Lake Okeechobee. The pools are located between the structures and are referenced using the letter associated with the downstream structure.

The structures along the C-38 canal function as dams and were located to step the canal water level down in increments of approximately 6 feet. In doing so, the natural slope of the river was removed and flat pools (impoundments) resembling stair-steps were created. The water level in each pool was generally held constant with little fluctuation or slope. This management lowered water in the northern reach of each pool and maintained flooded marsh in the southern or lower section of each pool. The resulting water surface area was approximately 7,600 acres.

The C-38 was excavated to a depth of approximately 30 feet. The bottom width varies from 90 feet near Lake Kissimmee to 300 feet just above the S-65D structure. The canal's length, width and water level varied in each pool. The head, or difference in water level above and below each structure, varied from structure to structure with rate of discharge but is typically 6 feet.

During the construction of the C-38 canal, a temporary easement was used to obtain areas adjacent to the canal for deposition of dredged material. The material was hydraulically deposited in linear alignments covering some 8,000 acres. The result was spoil piles averaging 15 feet above pre-project topography. The material consisted of hydraulically sifted subsoil sands and clays with limited organic fraction and high percolation rates. The material became part of the property upon which it was deposited. A number of landowners subsequently used the material to fill low areas on their property. At two locations in Okeechobee County, the spoil was used to build flood free, fly-in residential subdivisions. Where material was left undisturbed, xeric vegetation emerged on the deposits.

The spoil material in the vicinity of backfilling activities associated with the KRR project will be used to backfill the C-38 canal. Lands within the 5-year floodplain were acquired in fee. This included acquisition of the spoil material.

The CS&F Project works improved navigation opportunities originally provided in the Congressional Act of 1902. Each water control structure along C-38 includes a 30-foot by 90-foot navigation lock, which can accommodate boats with drafts up to 5.5 feet. The canal provides continuous navigation; however, interpool navigation is limited to daylight hours of lock operations.

Prior to the completion of the first phase of the KRR project, there were approximately 68 miles of river oxbows, often referred to as remnant river channels, between Lake Kissimmee and Lake Okeechobee. These were created when the C-38 canal was dredged through the historic Kissimmee River/Floodplain system. These secondary channels features are of widely varying water depths that receive little to no inflows except from tributaries or through culverts associated with the S-65B, S-65C and S-65D tieback levees.

This system has been modified by the first phase of construction of the KRR project. This construction was completed in February 2001 and was located in Pools B and C. The first phase of the project backfilled approximately 7 miles of C-38 canal from just north of the S-65B structure south to approximately the Istokpoga Canal. One and one quarter miles of new river channel were dredged to reconnect 14 miles of the historic river that had been bisected by the construction of the C-38 canal. The S-65B structure was demolished creating an interconnected river/floodplain system in the former Pool B and Pool C area.

Since completion of the first phase of the KRR project, 14 miles of river channel have been restored and receive near continuous flows due to the interim operational schedule for the S-65 structure.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - KISSIMMEE REGION

Several planned and ongoing environmental restoration projects are expected to be completed, which would beneficially affect water quality in the Kissimmee Watershed. Of particular importance is the Kissimmee River Restoration Project (including the Headwaters Revitalization and Modified Level II Backfilling projects). The Kissimmee River Restoration Project is expected to result in the restoration of approximately 7,200 acres of former wetlands in the vicinity of the

Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (USACE, 1996) and at least 28,000 acres of former (drained) wetlands south of Lake Kissimmee (USACE, 1991).

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - KISSIMMEE RIVER RESTORATION

In the future without plan condition, the Kissimmee River Restoration Project will be in place and functioning. The restoration project, authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 1992, will create a more natural physical environment in the Kissimmee River Basin. The major components of the project include the following:

- Reestablishment of inflows from Lake Kissimmee that will be similar to historical discharge characteristics (headwaters component)
- Acquisition of approximately 105,095 acres of land in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and river valley
- Continuous backfilling of 22 miles of canal
- Removal of two water control structures
- Recarving of 9 miles of new river channel

The Kissimmee Watershed contributes about 30 percent of the water input to Lake Okeechobee. The supply of water to Lake Okeechobee is anticipated to be reduced by about 1.60 percent as a result of the implementation of this project.

As a component to the Kissimmee River Restoration Project, the modification of the Upper Chain of Lakes regulation schedules and associated canal and water control structure modifications, will restore the ability to simulate the historic seasonal flow from Lake Kissimmee to the Kissimmee River Basin, and provide higher fluctuations of water levels in the lakes. The project will result in the expansion of the lakes' littoral zones by up to 7,200 acres, and improved habitat to fish and wildlife on lakes Kissimmee, Hatchineha, Cypress, Tiger and Jackson. The project also will increase spatial and temporal dynamics produced through long-term fluctuations of seasonal water levels.

The Kissimmee River Restoration Project will include two hydrologic conditions (criteria) that must be reestablished to restore the Kissimmee River Basin ecosystem. These conditions are the reestablishment of continuous flow with duration and variability characteristics comparable to prechannelization records and the reestablishment of stage hydrographs that result in floodplain inundation frequencies comparable to prechannelization hydroperiods, including seasonal and long-term variability characteristics.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - KISSIMMEE REGION

By 2050, water quality conditions in the Kissimmee Watershed south of urbanized Orange County, are expected to be improved as compared to existing conditions, due to ongoing and planned ecological restoration programs in the drainage basin. In its 1998 303(d) list, the FDEP identified approximately 25 water bodies or segments of water bodies within the Kissimmee Watershed where water quality was not adequate to sustain designated uses. Several of the 303(d) listed water bodies are actually reaches of the Kissimmee River. Most of the watershed is classified as Class III (“fishable–swimmable”) waters; several water bodies within the watershed are designated Outstanding Florida Waters by the state of Florida. Pollutants and/or water quality criteria identified contributing to impairment of designated use include: low levels of dissolved oxygen (DO), excessive nutrients, coliform bacteria, high biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), several trace metals including mercury (based on fish-consumption advisories), turbidity and un-ionized ammonia.

Kissimmee River Restoration projects are expected to reduce net pollution loading to the Kissimmee River and in downstream Lake Okeechobee through the restoration of wetlands presently existing as agricultural lands currently contributing pollutants to wetlands. Restored wetlands will also have a pollutant assimilation function, resulting in improved water quality in downstream water bodies (tributaries and oxbows). Additional ongoing land acquisition activities by the SFWMD will supplement ongoing environmental restoration projects (SFWMD, 1997a).

The extent of urbanization in the vicinity of the cities of Orlando and Kissimmee, north of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes is expected to increase. While new developments must comply with water quality treatment requirements for storm water runoff, the net load of pollutants, particularly those typically associated with urban storm water runoff contributed to the watershed north of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes is expected to increase. Most of this increased pollution load is expected to be retained in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and not enter the Kissimmee River – Lake Okeechobee system. Urbanization and attendant pollution loads in the region are not expected to increase significantly south of Lake Kissimmee.

Water Use in the Kissimmee Watershed

Water use is divided into urban and agriculture (**Table 3**). Agriculture is the largest existing and largest projected water user within the basin.

Table 3. Kissimmee Watershed Water Demands.

Land Use	1995	2020	Percent Change
Urban	35,602	68,153	76
Agricultural	112,668	173,995	54
Total Water Demand	148,270	242,148	63

Agency Jurisdictions

Federal Jurisdiction on the Kissimmee Watershed involves the regulatory responsibilities of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The USACE is responsible for prescribing the operational criteria and the regulation schedules for the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Flood Control Project. Their primary regulatory functions include operation and maintenance of the levees and major outlet works, dredge and fill activities, maintaining navigable waters, cleanup of pollution spills and the protection of endangered species.

The USEPA is responsible for protection of the environmental resources of the Kissimmee Watershed.

State agencies involved with the management and regulation of the Kissimmee River Basin are primarily, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Their jurisdictions include the protection of water quality, wetland resources, fisheries and wildlife resources.

At the regional level, the SFWMD and two regional planning councils have jurisdiction within the Kissimmee River Basin planning area. The SFWMD's authority is to manage and protect the water resources in a 16-county region. Regional Planning Council jurisdictions are assigned by county. The Central Florida Regional Planning Council has jurisdiction within Okeechobee and Highlands counties. The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council has jurisdiction within Polk and Osceola counties. Regional Planning Councils have responsibilities to develop regional comprehensive policy plans for protection of water resources within the planning area and provide technical assistance to local governments and evaluate the impacts anticipated from development of the region on regional resources.

The local governments listed below have the authority to control land use in the Kissimmee Watershed through their comprehensive plans and land development regulations. Sectors that exist at the local government level include planning, building, zoning and regulatory departments, water and sewer utilities, city and police departments, and soil, water and conservation districts.

Local counties in the Kissimmee Watershed include: Highlands, Okeechobee, Osceola, Polk and Orange.

Point and Nonpoint Sources of Pollution in the Watershed

Point sources of pollution are defined as discharges to surface and ground waters where discrete measures of water flow and water quality may be taken. In the Kissimmee Watershed planning area, domestic wastewater treatment and Industrial waste facility discharges are considered point sources, as shown in **Table 4**. Domestic wastewater and industrial waste facilities in the planning area are regulated by the FDEP.

Table 4. Permits in the Kissimmee Watershed.

Permit Type	Permit Agency	Total Sources	Permit Activity
Point Sources			
Industrial Wastewater	FDEP	95	Industrial Treatment Systems
Domestic Wastewater	FDEP	130	Private and Municipal Wastewater Facilities
Petroleum Contaminate Sites	FDEP	841	Gas Stations and Storage Tanks
Nonpoint Sources			
Dairies	FDEP	15	Dairy Farms BMPs
Works of the District Permits	SFWMD	442	Agricultural, Industrial, Commercial, NPS BMPs
Surface Water Management Permits	SFWMD	2,183	Stormwater Management Systems
Waste Disposal Sites	FDEP	47	Landfills

Nonpoint source pollution is usually associated with land use activities that do not have a single discrete discharge point. These pollution sources are usually delineated into rural and urban. Rural nonpoint sources include storm water runoff and are associated with agricultural activities. Urban nonpoint sources are also primarily conveyed by storm water and contain pollutants associated with urban land use.

Management Strategies for Restoration and Protection of the Water Body to Class III or Better Surface Water Quality Status

Most of the watershed is classified as Class III (fishable, swimmable) waters and several waterbodies within the watershed are designated Outstanding Florida Waters by the state of Florida.

LAND USE - KISSIMMEE REGION

Orlando, at the headwaters of the Kissimmee Watershed, is the primary economic and transportation center in the area. Once the center of the state's orange production, the local economy of Orlando and the surrounding area now focuses on tourism. Kissimmee, located in Osceola County, is located 8 miles east of Disney World and 17 miles south of Orlando, and is influenced largely by tourism activities in the Orlando area. The other major incorporated area of Osceola County, the city of St. Cloud, is primarily a retirement community.

Land uses in the Upper Basin around the perimeters of Lakes Kissimmee, Hatchineha, Cypress, Rosalie, Tiger and Jackson are primarily pasture, some agriculture and a large amount of wetlands. Marinas, fish camps and various public facilities, such as boat launching sites and picnic areas, are located around the lakes. Development is more intense upstream of Cypress Lake, particularly in the Lake Tohopekaliga – East Lake Tohopekaliga (Toho) chain. Lake Kissimmee State Park is on the extreme northwestern periphery of Lake Kissimmee and the Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area and Prairie Lakes Preserve border the southeastern half of Lake

Kissimmee. The 45,000-acre Kissimmee Prairie State Reserve is directly east of Avon Park in Pool B. Small residential and commercial areas are also scattered around most of the lakes.

Agriculture continues to play an important role in the region. In the Kissimmee River Basin, most of the area between Lake Kissimmee and Lake Okeechobee is in fewer than fifty large, private land holdings and several hundred subdivided property holdings. Agriculture remains the primary land use activity within the Kissimmee River Basin, being dominated by extensive beef cattle production and dairy activities.

The Avon Park Air Force Bombing Range is located within the Highlands County portion of the Kissimmee River Basin. This 107,000-acre federal facility is used both as a training facility for Armed Forces personnel and as a management area for wetlands adjacent to the Kissimmee River.

Kissimmee River Basin lands have undergone substantial change over the last twenty years. Most notable is the conversion of unimproved pasture land to improved pasture at an accelerated pace during the period 1958 to 1972.

In the Upper Basin, most of the development susceptible to flood damage is urban, where damage is primarily a function of the depths of flooding inside structures or the stage of flooding. Single family residential land use is the primary type of development affected by flooding in the Upper Basin. Major affected areas are located around the towns of Kissimmee and St. Cloud, which cover only six percent of the damage susceptible flood-prone area but account for almost half of the basin's standard project flood damage. Other affected areas include Lake Hart, Lake Mary Jane, Pells Cove, Hidden Lake, Lake Hatchineha, Lake Alligator, Lake Rosalie and the area west of the southern part of Lake Kissimmee. Existing average annual equivalent flood damages in the Upper Basin are estimated to be \$1,226,100 (8 $\frac{3}{4}$ percent rate).

In the Kissimmee River Basin, mobile homes located around Pool E are the primary areas that would be affected by flooding. Although this land use would account for most of the damages from a standard project flood and 100-year event, it is not susceptible to damage during smaller floods. Other damages occur due to the duration of flooding on pasture land. Although agricultural use is the primary land use in the Kissimmee River Basin, flood damages are relatively minor for this activity due to the short duration of flooding, a result of the existing project works. Existing average annual equivalent damages in the Kissimmee River Basin are estimated to be \$97,700 (8 $\frac{3}{4}$ percent rate).

Land Use in the Kissimmee Watershed

The existing land use in the Kissimmee Watershed planning area is generally more urban in the north than in the south, as shown in **Table 5** Continued urbanization is anticipated in the north, while in the south, agricultural acreage is projected to increase.

Table 5. Acreage and Percentage of Land Use by County Area.

Land Use	Orange	Osceola	Polk	Highlands	Okeechobee	Glades	Kissimmee Watershed
Agriculture	31,513 (17%)	218,656 (35%)	44,243 (16%)	259,362 (53%)	189,625 (52%)	139,470 (47%)	882,869 (40%)
Urban	60,243 (32%)	52,212 (8%)	51,449 (19%)	42,194 (9%)	21,928 (6%)	2,760 (1%)	230,788 (10%)
Wetlands	36,338 (20%)	164,355 (27%)	59,571 (22%)	76,821 (16%)	66,800 (18%)	59,678 (20%)	463,563 (21%)
Forest	30,264 (16%)	74,857 (12%)	65,136 (24%)	41,586 (9%)	32,591 (9%)	68,578 (23%)	313,012 (14%)
Rangeland	2005 (1%)	26,012 (4%)	25,270 (9%)	33,489 (7%)	48,284 (13%)	20,223 (7%)	155,283 (7%)
Barren	3,419 (2%)	2,842 (1%)	1,420 (1%)	3,733 (0%)	3,588 (1%)	2,471 (1%)	17,473 (1%)
Water	21,796 (12%)	81,082 (13%)	23,885 (9%)	30,022 (6%)	4,299 (1%)	1,492 (1%)	162,576 (7%)
Total	185,578 (100%)	620,016 (100%)	270,974 (100%)	487,207 (100%)	367,115 (100%)	294,672 (100%)	2,225,562 (100%)

Agriculture

Osceola, Polk, Highlands and Okeechobee counties were included in this region. More than two million acres in these counties are farmed, with more than half of this area devoted to pasture land (UFBEBR, 1995). Much of this acreage is likely categorized as unique farmland based upon its location, growing season and high value crops, including citrus. Almost a quarter of a million acres in the Kissimmee Watershed are irrigated (UFBEBR, 1995), requiring a dependable water supply. Large farms characterize this region, with relatively low productivity per acre. These four counties are among the top five counties in Florida for cattle production, both beef and dairy (FASS, 1996a). More than 200,000 acres are used for citrus production. Approximately 11,000 people are employed in agricultural production and services representing a payroll of approximately \$21 million (UFBEBR, 1995). The market value of all agricultural products in this region totals approximately \$575 million (UFBEBR, 1995).

ELIGIBLE KISSIMMEE REGION PROJECTS

Kissimmee Watershed Water Management Planning Projects

Water management planning efforts in the Kissimmee Watershed planning area include a variety of interrelated studies and activities, in both the public and private sectors. Each plan or study addresses unique water management issues while maintaining close relationships with water supply planning, as shown in **Table 6**. The related efforts with the most significant influence on the implementation of the Kissimmee Basin (KB) Water Supply Plan include the establishment of Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) to several lakes in the Kissimmee Watershed. Another ongoing

effort that will help to preserve the water body is the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads on the river and several lakes in the Kissimmee Watershed.

Table 6. Kissimmee Watershed Related Water Management Planning Efforts.

Study	Scope/Primary Goal	Relationship to KB Water Supply Plan	Timeframes
KB Water Supply Plan	Adequate and reliable water supply	N/A	Update 2005
Kissimmee River Restoration Evaluation	Environmental restoration of Kissimmee River floodplain, improved surface water quality.	Changing deliveries to Lake Okeechobee	2015
Kissimmee Basin Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs)	Prevent significant harm to the water resources and ecology of surface water resources in the Kissimmee Watershed	MFLs will more clearly define the quantity of water available for consumptive uses. Recovery or prevention strategy has potential to alter future water management activities, including use of water resources in the Kissimmee Watershed	2004-2006
Kissimmee Basin Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)	Prevent significant harm to the water quality and ecology of surface water resources in the Kissimmee Watershed	TMDLs will set the maximum pollutants loads that the water body can take to achieve water quality standards	2005-2011
Upper Kissimmee Basin Long-Term Management Plan	Develop recommendations and associated performance measures to improve the health of the Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes ecosystem.	Final report and recommendations will be available for incorporation in 2005 KB WSP update.	2005

Kissimmee River Restoration Project

Project History and Overview

In 1948, Congress authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to initiate construction of the Central & Southern Florida (C&SF) Project for flood control and protection. This was in reaction to the drought of 1944-1945 and a major hurricane in 1947 that caused extensive flooding in the Kissimmee Watershed and illustrated the inadequacy of the basin's existing water control system. In 1954, Congress specifically authorized the Kissimmee River portion of the project which was planned and designed from 1954 to 1960. Between 1962 and 1971, the Kissimmee River was channelized and transformed into a series of impounded reservoirs (Pools A-E). Inflow from the upper basin was regulated by six water control structures (S-65s). Water control structures and canals were built in the upper lakes region to allow regulation of water flow within and between the lakes.

The objectives of the C&SF Project were to provide flood protection to the Kissimmee Upper Basin, convert floodplain wetlands to usable agricultural lands and reduce flooding impacts associated with major storm events. Upon completion, the project was successful at meeting its objectives, however, it was realized that the draining of the floodplain wetlands had significantly impacted fish, bird and other wildlife resources in the region. Channelization drained two-thirds of the historic floodplain habitat and excavated and/or filled one-third of the historic river channel. This action drastically reduced wintering waterfowl, wading bird and game fish populations, and significantly damaged ecosystem functions. Channelization also resulted in a reduction in the nutrient assimilative capacity of the river's floodplain and loss of aesthetic qualities inherent in a natural meandering river system.

The restoration project evolved over the years from extensive work performed by the USACE, SFWMD and a variety of other interests in Florida and throughout the nation. The 1992 Water Resources Development Act authorized the Kissimmee River Restoration Project, including the headwaters revitalization component, tying the headwaters benefit to the Kissimmee River Restoration project. Also authorized was a 50-50 cost sharing agreement between the state and federal government for the total cost of the project. A Project Cooperation Agreement between the two agencies was executed on March 22, 1994.

The goal of the restoration project is to restore the ecological integrity of the Kissimmee Watershed through the reestablishment of an estimated 40 square miles of river/floodplain habitat, 28,000 acres of wetland and 43 continuous miles of meandering river channel.

The Kissimmee River Restoration Project consists of both structural and nonstructural modifications, and acquisition of approximately 105,095 acres of land. The total cost of the project is estimated to be approximately \$578 million.

The restoration project reestablishes inflows from Lake Kissimmee to provide flow velocities and volumes similar to the ones that existed prior to channelization; backfills 22 continuous miles of the C-38 canal in Pools B, C and D; removes 2 water control structures and locks (S-65B and S-65C); recarves approximately 9 miles of river channel; backfills local farm ditches; and degrades local farm levees.

The ground breaking for construction of the restoration project was April of 1994 with the backfilling of 1000 feet of the C-38 canal in Pool B. Restoration began in the Upper basin in 1997 with improvements made to the S-65 structure, operation and maintenance dredging of the C-35 canal and widening of the C-36 and C-37 canals. Restoration in the Kissimmee River basin began in June of 1998 with degrading of the MacArthur levee, backfilling of local farm ditches and degrading of local farm levees. Phase I backfilling in Pool C began in June 1999 and was completed in February 2001. The S-65 B structure was demolished in June 2000.

Historic Conditions

The historic Kissimmee River meandered approximately 103 miles within a 1–2 mile wide floodplain. The floodplain was approximately 56 miles long and fell an average of .3 feet in elevation per mile along the river channel. The river was comprised of a primary channel and a complex system of interwoven secondary channels and/or braids.

Under historic conditions, river flows generally exceeded 250 cfs 95 percent of the time. The river moved very slowly, with normal river velocities averaging less than two feet per second. Wetland, wildlife, waterfowl, fisheries and other biological components were once part of an integrated and resilient river floodplain ecosystem. A fluctuating hydroperiod, along with the undulating topography of the floodplain, a meandering river channel, oxbows and natural discontinuous levees, enhanced and maintained habitat diversity, including a mosaic of intermixed vegetation and other complex physical, chemical and biological interactions and processes.

Early flooding conditions in the Kissimmee Watershed were the result of runoff accumulation on the flat lands of the basin and the subsequent rise of lake levels within the Upper Basin, which remained at high levels because of poor outlet capacity.

Channelization Impacts

The physical effects of channelization, including alteration of the system's hydrologic characteristics, largely eliminated river and floodplain wetlands and degraded fish and wildlife values of the Kissimmee River ecosystem (Toth 1993). The meandering river was transformed into a 56-mile-long, 30-feet-deep, 300-feet-wide canal. Excavation of the canal and deposition of the resulting spoil eliminated approximately 35 miles of river channel and 6,200 acres of floodplain wetland habitat. Transformation of the river- floodplain ecosystem into a series of deep impoundments drained much of the floodplain (Toth 1995), eliminated historical water-level fluctuations, and greatly modified flow characteristics. Approximately 26,000–31,000 acres of pre-channelized floodplain wetlands were drained, covered with spoil, or converted into canal. The floodplain at the lower end of each pool remained inundated, but pre-channelization water level fluctuations were eliminated. Low-and no-flow regimes in remnant river channels resulted in encroachment of vegetation, especially floating exotics (such as *Pistia stratiotes* [water lettuce] and *Eich-hornia crassipes* [water hyacinth]) to the center of the river channel. Senescence and death of encroaching vegetation covered the shifting sand substrate of the historic channel with thick accumulations (up to 3 feet) of organic matter, greatly increasing the biological oxygen demand of the system (Toth 1990).

River channelization and degradation of the floodplain led to severe impacts on the system's biological components. By the early 1970s, floodplain utilization by wintering waterfowl declined by 92 percent (Perrin et al. 1982). Wading bird populations, a highly visible component of the historic system, declined and were largely replaced by *Bubulcus ibis* (cattle egret), a species generally associated with upland, terrestrial habitats (Toland 1990). Low-and no-flow regimes in the canal and remnant river channels resulted in chronically low dissolved oxygen levels and sport fish species, like largemouth bass were largely replaced by species tolerant of low dissolved oxygen regimes (such as *Lepisosteus platyrahincus* [Florida gar] and *Amia calva* [bowfin]). Rheophylic invertebrate taxa typical of many large river systems (for example, hydropsychid caddisflies and heptageniid mayflies) were replaced by species common to lentic systems (for example, *Chaoborus*, *Pelocoris* [Hemiptera:Naucoridae], and hydrophilid beetles) (Toth 1993). Stabilized water levels and reduced flow also eliminated river-floodplain interactions. Influx of organic matter, invertebrates, and forage fishes to the river from the floodplain during periods of water recession was eliminated. Stabilized water levels also largely eliminated adult spawning and foraging habitat, as well as larval and juvenile refuge sites for fish on the floodplain (Trexler 1995).

Restoration of Hydrology

The Kissimmee River Restoration Project will provide flows to the restored Kissimmee River approaching the duration and variability of discharges, which occurred before the river was channelized. Minimum flows are expected to exceed 250 cubic feet per second (cfs) about 95 percent of the time, compared to the current flows, which are less than 30 cfs 50 percent of the time. Maximum velocities for the restored channel will be between 0.8 and 1.8 feet per second during bankfull stage. The stage recession rate should rarely exceed one foot per month. Overbank flooding will occur within the restored area when discharges exceed 1,400 - 2,000 cfs.

Based on historic stage-duration hydrologic data and expected future flows from Lake Kissimmee, overbank flooding of the river valley in a typical year will start in July or August, and reach a peak from September through November and gradually recede from December through June. Very wet or dry years and storm events will vary this pattern.

Restoration Studies on the Water Body

Degradation of the Kissimmee River's ecosystem, wetlands, and water quality caused by channelization of the Kissimmee River has been the subject of numerous federal, state and local studies over the past thirty years.

Local involvement in environmental restoration began in the early 1970 soon after channelization was complete. A 1972 USGS report (Final Report on the Special Project to Prevent Eutrophication of Lake Okeechobee) concluded that Lake Okeechobee was eutrophying at an accelerated rate due to channelization of the Kissimmee River and the pumping of agricultural runoff from the EAA into Lake Okeechobee. In reaction to this, the state began a series of initiatives aimed at getting Congress to authorize a feasibility study for the restoration of the Kissimmee River to its prechannelization state.

Congress authorized the USACE to conduct the first feasibility study for the restoration of the Kissimmee River in 1978. This was followed in 1984 by Florida Governor Graham adopting the Seven Point Plan which laid the groundwork for state studies on restoration and made the South Florida Water Management District the lead agency for implementation of the restoration project in Florida. Shortly after, the SFWMD initiated the Phase I demonstration project.

Nonfederal Studies

In 1984–1985, a demonstration project was constructed by SFWMD. Three weirs and a flow through marsh were constructed in Pool B for a total project cost of \$1.4 million. The weirs diverted flows from the C-38 canal into the historic remnant river channels. Their purpose was to evaluate their use in restoring more natural hydrology while still maintaining flood protection. The weirs demonstrated that flood protection could be maintained and indicated that restored flow would revitalize the remnant river channels by flushing out floating vegetation and accumulated organic deposits and restoring natural sedimentation processes. The purpose of the flow through marsh was to evaluate the viability of the floodplain's seedbank. The marsh was reflooded and the former wetland that had been converted to pasture quickly reverted to wetlands once appropriate hydroperiods were reestablished.

In October 1988, the SFWMD conducted the Kissimmee River Restoration Symposium, where the state's Kissimmee River Environmental Restoration goals were formulated. The symposium ecological review panel concurred with participating scientist that reestablishment of lost ecological values would be achieved only with a holistic, ecosystem restoration perspective.

In a report dated June 1990, the SFWMD proposed a plan to restore the ecological integrity of the Kissimmee River using an ecosystem approach. This plan was called the SFWMD's Alternative Plan Evaluation and Preliminary Design Report. The objective of the plan was to achieve environmental restoration goals while meeting flood control, navigation, water supply and water quality needs. The restoration goal was to reestablish an ecosystem capable of supporting and maintaining species diversity, distribution and quantity representative of the natural habitat of the river basin. The report establishes system hydrology and floodplain hydraulics as key factors in environmental restoration. Four basic alternatives were considered in the report: Weiring, Plugging, and Level I and Level II Backfilling. Only the Level II Backfilling Plan was adequate as meeting the minimum restoration criteria, by restoring 24,000 acres of floodplain and 52 miles of river channel, resulting in a restored 35 square miles of river/floodplain ecosystem. The Level II Backfilling Plan was SFWMD's recommended restoration alternative for the Kissimmee River.

Federal Studies

In response to resolutions by the Committee on Public Works and Transportation of the United States House of Representatives, and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the United States Senate (dated April 25, 1978), the USACE studied alternative plans for restoration of the Kissimmee River. The study report was submitted to the Assistant Secretary of The Army for Civil Work in 1985. The study concluded that although project modifications responsive to environmental concerns could be constructed, none provided positive net contributions to the nation's economic development. Accordingly, the Chief of Engineers recommended that no federal action be undertaken and that report information be used by nonfederal interests in determining long-range solutions to water and related land resource problems in the basin.

Under authority of Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, the Jacksonville District Engineer initiated feasibility studies of the plan for revitalization of the Upper Kissimmee Basin. The study was later called the Headwaters Revitalization Project and would consist of changes in lake operation schedules, channel enlargements, modification of existing water control structures, and as a result of higher lake water levels, acquisition of 18,500 acres of land by the local sponsor, SFWMD.

A second federal feasibility study, which was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 1990, was also assembled by the USACE. The feasibility study was also an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The congressional authority directed that the study be based on implementing the SFWMD's Level II Backfilling Plan. Therefore there was no need to develop new planning objectives or alternative plans.

As a result of these and other studies, two restoration plans were developed, that, when implemented together, will restore environmental values throughout the Kissimmee Watershed. The two components are Headwaters Revitalization and Kissimmee River basin projects.

Maintenance of the Water Body after Restoration

A basic premise of the Kissimmee River Restoration Project is to reestablish the natural hydrologic processes that shaped and maintained the ecological integrity of the historical river and floodplain ecosystem. The reestablishment of historical hydrologic characteristics is expected to drive the restoration process, and ensure the return and preservation of the system's environmental values. Thus, the restored ecosystem is expected to be largely self-managing by natural hydrologic processes. However, there are at least two potential management concerns for the restored system, invasive/exotic vegetation and public use. Although existing invasive and exotic plant species in the Kissimmee River system, including water lettuce, water hyacinth and Brazilian pepper are expected to be largely eliminated or at least controlled by the reestablishment of historical discharge characteristics and hydroperiods, some minor control efforts will likely be needed. Of greater concern is the Old World climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*), which is a recent invader of the system and seems capable of persisting in the restored system. Efforts to eradicate or control this species are underway and may be critical for achievement of restoration. The other potential management issue relates to the use/ exploitation of the restored system and associated resources. The need for management of public use, such as airboating and hunting pressure will be based on information derived from the projects ongoing ecological evaluation program.

Restoration Project Status

Planning, engineering, design and construction have been initiated. A test backfilling project was initiated in 1994 and completed in September 1994. The restoration project is divided into the following five restoration elements:

1. Restoration Evaluation
2. Headwaters Revitalization
3. Phase I Backfilling
4. Phase II/III Backfilling Projects
5. Phase IV Backfilling Projects

The Phase I Backfilling was completed in February 2001. The restoration project is underway and expected to continue until 2012. The Restoration Evaluation Program is designed to evaluate the success of the project in meeting the established restoration goals, to provide for continuous, scientifically informed fine-tuning of the construction and adaptive management of the recovering and restored ecosystem.

The project allows for construction of flood mitigation projects in lieu of land acquisition. Several flood mitigation projects have been approved for residential communities within the Kissimmee River floodplain and adjacent to lakes Kissimmee, Cypress, and Hatchineha. One such project for the Kissimmee River Shores community was completed in July 2003. Another such project is under construction for the Hidden Acres Estates community.

Avon Park southern boundary fence was completed July 2003.

A 300 foot span bridge across US98 in pool D with ten box culverts is under construction and scheduled for completion in November 2003. S84 Spillway addition is scheduled to be completed 2003.

Resources are also committed to further describe, document, and model the baseline surficial aquifer conditions in the Kissimmee River basin. This work involves installation of shallow ground water wells and implementation of an integrated surface and groundwater hydrologic model. The results of this work will allow the District to defend itself against claims of inverse condemnation by allowing climatologic impacts on ground water levels to be differentiated from project hydrologic impacts.

Project Schedule

Kissimmee River Restoration efforts began in 1991 with specific project tasks in the Upper Basin and Phase I portions of the project. In 1994, the Scientific Restoration Evaluation Program began. It is scheduled to continue for four years past the completion of the final phase of construction. Construction completion is projected for 2012. The major project phases for the Kissimmee River Restoration effort are reflected in **Figure 5**.

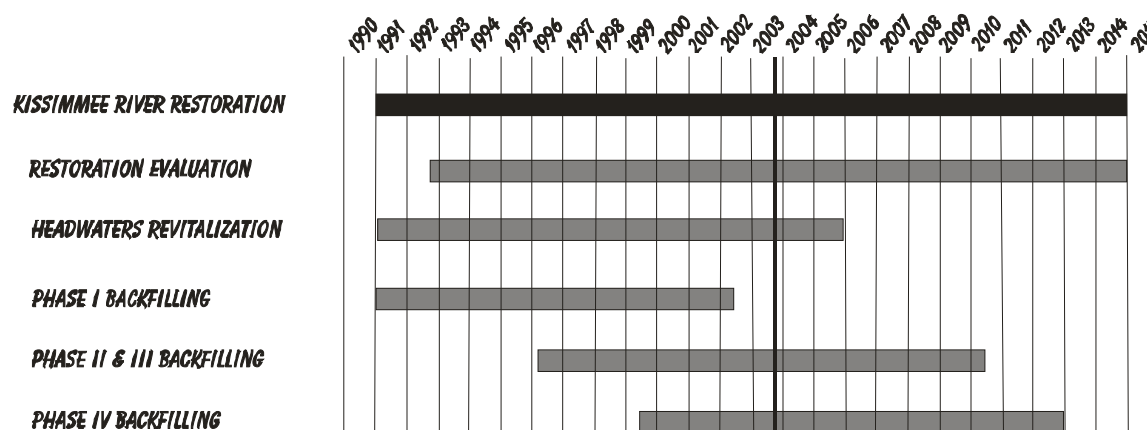


Figure 5. Kissimmee River Restoration Project Schedule.

Land Acquisition for Kissimmee River Restoration

The SFWMD has been purchasing lands for the Kissimmee Restoration Project since the mid-1980s. Lands have been purchased in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes in order to facilitate the implementation of the new regulation schedules in the lakes. Raising the lake regulation schedules will allow the SFWMD to store more water in the lakes, making it available for release to the Kissimmee River. The additional water is necessary in order to provide a year round flow when the river is restored. Lands have been purchased in the Kissimmee River Basin as a requirement for the restoration of the floodplain and re-establishment of the remnant river segments.

Fee title acquisition is required for 75 percent of the project lands. The remaining 25 percent are required for temporary, construction, flowage or access easements. The USACE set the defining criteria for fee versus easement acquisition at the inception of the project. That criterion is a function of the topographic elevation of the land parcel. In the Kissimmee River Basin, properties measuring

at or below the five-year flood line can be acquired in fee and properties measuring between the five and 100-year flood line can be acquired as a flowage easement. In the Upper Basin, properties between the 52.5 and 54 foot elevation can be acquired in fee. **Table 7** shows approximate land acquisition needs and approximate acquisition status for the Kissimmee Restoration Project.

Table 7. Kissimmee River Restoration Approximate Real Estate Acquisition Information.

Area	Acreage Needed	Acreage Obtained	Remaining Acreage
Upper Kissimmee Basin	36,763	33,781	2,982
Kissimmee River Basin	68,332	51,993	16,339
Total	105,095	85,774	19,321
Percent of Total	N/A	82%	18%

There are no lands that have been acquired for the Kissimmee River Restoration Project as a function of the need to protect or recharge groundwater.

Goals and Performance Measures

The Kissimmee River Restoration Project was designed to restore ecological integrity to the Kissimmee River.

Focus Areas: Flood Protection and Natural Systems

Performance Indicators:

FLOOD PROTECTION

Objective 3: Promote nonstructural approaches to achieve flood protection and protect and restore the natural features and functions of the floodplain.

Measures: Percentage of total project acres (75,000) in Kissimmee Watershed floodplain mitigated or acquired.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
88%	95%	100%

Percentage of total project acres (35,000) around lakes Tiger, Cypress, Hatchineha and Kissimmee acquired in order to implement Headwaters Revitalization.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
85%	95%	100%

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Objective 2: Restore the integrity and function of water resources and related natural systems to a naturally functioning condition.

(Cumulative) Measures:

Number of 8 hydrologic / geomorphologic expectations met.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
4	4	8

Number of 5 water quality expectations met.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
2	2	3

Number of 7 invertebrate expectations met.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
0	1	1

Number of 8 avian and endangered species expectations met.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
2	2	2

Number of 3 fish expectations met.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
0	0	0

Number of 10 vegetation (including algae) expectations met.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
1	1	2

Number of 2 herpetofaunal expectations met.

Estimated FY 2003	Target FY 2004	Target FY 2005
0	0	2

Expenditures:	Actual FY 2002	Adopted FY 2003	Change FY 2002– >2003	Proposed FY 2004	Target FY 2005
	\$58.3M	\$58.7M	1%	\$49M	\$40M

Significant Changes in Expenditures: None.

FY 2004 Key Action Steps:

- KRR Land acquisition
- KRR Mitigation in lieu of land acquisition
- KRR Evaluation Program (KRREP)

Conclusions

The Kissimmee River Restoration Project is a monumental project in many ways. It is the first attempt at restoring a river ecosystem. It is the culmination of cooperative efforts between many, state, federal and local organizations that have worked together for over three decades to make this project happen. This ambitious project represents the culmination of more than 25 years of research, design and public activism. The scientific approach towards the comprehensive evaluation of the restoration program sets the Kissimmee River Project apart from all other restoration efforts. Restoration benefits are expected to begin immediately and continue for many generations to come. More detailed information is available at www.sfwmd.gov/org/erd/krr/index.html

Chapter 4

LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED REGION

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS - LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED REGION

Lake Okeechobee lies 30 miles west from the Atlantic coast and 60 miles east from the Gulf of Mexico in the central part of the peninsula. Lake Okeechobee is a broad shallow lake occurring as a bedrock depression (**Figure 6**). The large, roughly circular lake, with a surface area of approximately 730 square miles, is the principal natural reservoir in southern Florida.

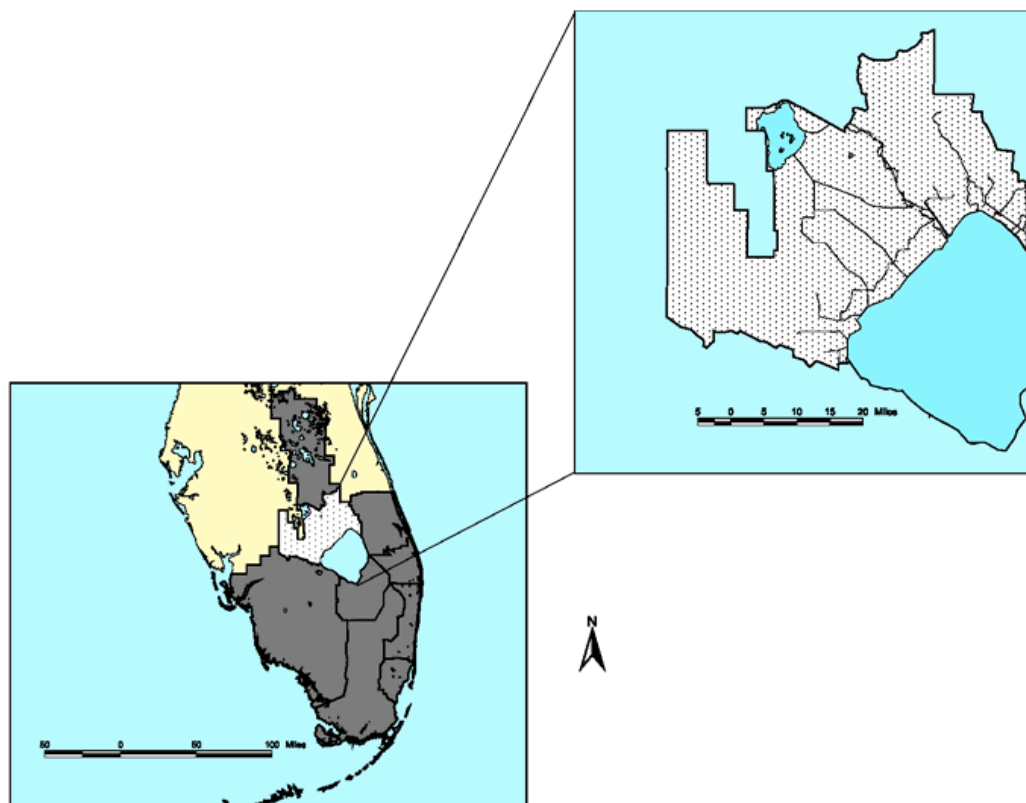


Figure 6. Lake Okeechobee Watershed Region.

The lake's largest outlets include the St. Lucie Canal eastward to the Atlantic Ocean and the Caloosahatchee Canal and River to the Gulf of Mexico. The four major agricultural canals – the West Palm Beach, Hillsboro, North New River and Miami canals - have a smaller capacity, but are used to release excess water to the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs), south of the lake, when storage and discharge capacity are available. When regulatory releases from the lake are required, excess water can be passed to the three WCAs up to the capacity of the pumping stations and agricultural canals, with the remainder going to the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico.

The waters of the lake are impounded by a system of encircling levees, which form a multi-purpose reservoir for navigation, water supply, flood control and recreation. Pumping stations and control structures in the levee along Lake Okeechobee are designed to move water either into or out of the lake as needed.

Other surface water inflows include the Kissimmee River, Fisheating Creek and Taylor Creek that flow into the lake from the north. Outflows include the Caloosahatchee River that flows out of the lake to the west; the St. Lucie and West Palm Beach canals that flow out of the lake to the east; and the Hillsboro, North New River and Miami canals that flow out of the lake to the south. The hydroperiod of the lake is partially controlled, permitting water levels to fluctuate with flood and drought conditions and the demand for water supply.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATER MANAGEMENT

Historically, water levels in Lake Okeechobee were probably much higher than they are today (Brooks, 1974), perhaps as high as 6.1 meters (20 feet) NGVD (National Geodetic Vertical Datum). Prior to large scale development and construction of the Herbert Hoover Dike, the lake had no channeled outflows and water overflowed the lake as sheet flow to the south and east. This resulted in a much larger and broader littoral zone and marsh ecosystem to the north and west than the existing one. Today, as the primary reservoir of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project, Lake Okeechobee is capable of storing 3.75 million acre-feet of water at an average depth of 2.7 meters (9 feet). Water levels in the lake are managed according to a regulation schedule developed by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie canals are the primary outlets for release of flood waters when the lake is above regulation stages.

A series of structures are situated around the lake, which provide flood protection, drainage control and facilitate navigation. The USACE operates these primary structures and navigation locks and is responsible for maintenance of the schedule. The SFWMD operates and maintains the secondary water control structures and pump stations.

Historically, Lake Okeechobee's regulation schedule was developed primarily to meet flood control and water supply objectives, the primary purposes for construction of the C&SF Project. The environmental concerns for the lake's littoral zone and wildlife habitat and the downstream estuaries have generally been compromised in order to meet the water supply needs of South Florida.

Trimble and Marban (1988) performed an analysis of the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule, which incorporated a trade off analysis framework and resulted in the recommendation of a schedule known as "Run 25." This schedule reduced the water quality impacts associated with regulatory discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries by reducing the need to discharge large volumes of freshwater from the lake, without significantly impacting existing flood control, water supply and environmental benefits. Run 25 was approved by the District's Governing Board in December 1991 and approved on a two year interim basis by the USACE in May of 1992. A new regulation schedule for the lake was formally adopted by the USACE in July 2000. This water supply and environmental (WSE) schedule uses climate forecasting to determine the volumes

of water to release from the lake under flood control circumstances, and has the potential to provide environmental benefits for the lake and downstream systems, while not sacrificing water supply. The extent of the benefits will depend in part on specific adaptive management protocols that were developed by the District. The WSE schedule appears to provide substantial benefits for the lake littoral zone and marsh. High lake stages, and regulatory discharges to the St. Lucie Estuary, which have plagued the lake, are reduced under WSE. Conditions within the Caloosahatchee River system are not expected to improve substantially under WSE. A key feature of the WSE schedule is the lower operational zone which allows the flexibility to deliver water to the Everglades during lower lake stages.

The enactment of the Lake Okeechobee Protection Act (LOPA) (Section 373.4595, Florida Statutes) in 2000 also advanced restoration efforts. This act provides an umbrella that captures many lake restoration efforts. It will significantly enhance mandates restoring and protecting the lake using a phased, watershed-based approach to reduce phosphorus loading to the lake and downstream receiving waters. Fulfilling this act requires a great deal of cooperation among government agencies and the public. To facilitate the execution of the Lake Okeechobee Protection Plan, an interagency committee was formed with individuals from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the SFWMD. The agencies are currently planning and implementing numerous management activities in the watershed to reduce phosphorus loading to the lake. These include: the construction of surface water storage reservoirs and stormwater treatment areas; the restoration of isolated wetlands; the development and implementation of best management practices to control nonpoint sources of pollution; the continuation of research and monitoring to ensure projects are designed and implemented to optimize success; the removal of phosphorus-rich sediment from tributaries to Lake Okeechobee; and the implementation of a sediment management feasibility study to determine whether or not it is feasible to reduce internal loading from the lake sediments. The Lake Okeechobee Protection Program sets forth a series of activities and deliverables for the coordinating agencies, of which the Lake Okeechobee Protection Plan is required. The Plan is due by January 1, 2004, with alternative plans, schedules, and costs currently being developed to meet the total phosphorus TMDL of 140 metric tons by the year 2015, as specified in the Protection Program. More current information regarding the current status of the LOPA activities can be found in the *Lake Okeechobee Protection Program Annual Report to the Legislature* (SFWMD, 2003b).

Water Quality

Lake Okeechobee may be considered a naturally eutrophic water body that is tending to become hypereutrophic, due primarily from nutrient inputs from the Kissimmee River and the Taylor Creek basins. Water quality conditions in the upper Chain of Lakes area appear to be improving, primarily due to rerouting of wastewater flows from the river to reuse and ground-water discharge sites. However, large quantities of nutrients are still discharged from Lake Toho to Lake Kissimmee and other downstream receiving waters. Water quality improves from Lake Kissimmee to near Lake Okeechobee, where the channel flows mostly through unimproved rangeland; however, pollutant loadings increase as cattle and dairies grow more numerous near the lake. Because the lake's phosphorus is internally recycled and a vast reservoir of the nutrient is stored in groundwater, as well as wetland and canal sediments, phosphorus within the lake may not reach acceptable levels for many decades or even a century.

According to the 1996 305(b) report (FDEP, 1996) for Lake Okeechobee, the major pollution sources for the lake continue to include runoff from ranch and dairy operations in the north where pollution has elevated phosphorus and coliform bacteria concentrations. In the south, historic backpumping of runoff from row crops and sugarcane has elevated nutrient and pesticide levels. The backpumping has mostly ceased but still occurs when water in the primary canal of the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) reaches 13 feet (flood-control levels). As a result, depending on location and seasonal rainfall or drought, the lake receives varying amounts of nutrients, substances creating high biological oxygen demand (BOD), bacteria and toxic materials. Other pollutants include high levels of total dissolved solids, unionized ammonia, chloride, color and dissolved organic chemicals.

Biological sampling indicated variable but generally eutrophic conditions. In recent years, several widespread algal blooms (one covering about 100 square miles) and at least one major fish kill (all of which were widely publicized) launched the environmental community and governmental agencies into intense investigation and analysis of the lake's problems. The Lake Okeechobee Technical Advisory Committee, formed to assess the situation and recommend solutions, determined that phosphorus from dairies and agriculture was a major cause of the noxious algal blooms and that levels should be reduced by 40 percent. A secondary cause of increased phosphorus might have been the flooding of hundreds of acres of perimeter wetlands after the SFWMD decided in the late 1970's to raise the lake's water level. The higher level also reduced valuable fish-spawning grounds and waterfowl feeding and nesting habitat.

The 1997 and 2002 Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan (SFWMD, 2002b) updates reported that phosphorus load reductions had occurred, but the 40 percent reduction goal in loads was not achieved. These reports recommended the implementation of programs and projects to improve the lake and watershed water quality situation. Even with the implementation of these programs and projects, nutrient loads to Lake Okeechobee have not decreased significantly. The highest inflow phosphorus concentrations continue to be found in the S-154 and S-191 basins where dairies are abundant and the majority of the out-of-compliance Works of the District (WOD) P-monitoring sites are found. Phosphorus loading is far in excess of the amount considered for a healthy Lake Okeechobee ecosystem and current model data predict that it may take decades before in-lake phosphorus concentrations will respond to reduced external loads.

The federal Clean Water Act (Title 33, Chapter 26, Subchapter III, Section 1313(d)), requires that each state develop total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for each water-quality-limited segment reported. A TMDL reflects the total pollutant loading, from all contributing sources, that a water segment can receive without exceeding its capacity to assimilate the pollutant loads and still meet applicable water quality standards. The phosphorus TMDL established for Lake Okeechobee is 140 metric tons, including rainfall, (based on a 5-year rolling average) to achieve an in-lake target phosphorus concentration of 40 parts per billion in the pelagic zone of the lake (FDEP, 2000). The restoration target was determined using computer models developed based on past research performed by the SFWMD using SWIM funds. This target will support a healthy lake system, restore the designated uses of Lake Okeechobee, and allow the lake to meet applicable water quality standards.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - LAKE OKEECHOBEE

Several watershed and in-lake cleanup projects are currently proposed. These include flow diversion projects for four Chapter 298 water control districts established under Florida Statutes (F.S.), diversion of flows from the 715 Farms area, and a critical project authorized pursuant to Section 528 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 – the Lake Okeechobee Water Retention/Phosphorus Removal Critical Project) to incrementally reduce inputs of nutrients to the lake. However, to sustain water quality improvements brought about by in-lake cleanup projects, pollutant source reduction programs, via agricultural land acquisition, and implementation of best management practices (BMPs) in the lake watershed must be implemented concurrently. The recently (2001) enacted FDEP Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) pollutant loading program is expected to result in additional pollutant load reduction activities in watersheds flowing to Lake Okeechobee.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - MANATEE PROTECTION

The West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) is listed as a federally endangered species and is one of the most endangered species in Florida. As a response to recent manatee mortality trends associated with water control structures, this project will provide operational changes and implement the installation of a manatee protection system at seven sector gates at navigational locks near Lake Okeechobee. The beneficial outcome of this project will be the reduction of risk, injury and mortality of the manatee. The seven sector gates include S-193 at Okeechobee and S-310 at Clewiston on Lake Okeechobee; St. Lucie Lock and Port Mayaca Lock on the St. Lucie Canal; and Moore Haven Lock, Ortona Lock and W. P. Franklin Lock on the Caloosahatchee River. The mechanism proposed would use hydroacoustic and pressure sensitive devices that will immediately stop the gates when an object is detected between the closing gates. These systems will transmit an alarm and signal to stop the gate movement when a manatee is detected. When an object or manatee activates the gate sensors, the gate will stop and open approximately six inches to release a manatee. As a result, a manatee will be able to travel between the open gates. After the gate opens, the operator can fully close the gate unless an object remains between the gates. Then the opening process will repeat the cycle as the sensors are activated again. Due to these structural modifications, manatees will be at a significantly less risk as they encounter locks with a sector gate. The future without plan condition assumes that the automatic gate sensor devices are installed on these lock sector gates.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - LAKE OKEECHOBEE REGULATION SCHEDULE

Lake Okeechobee has undergone numerous changes since the initial construction of Herbert Hoover Dike. Today, the Lake Okeechobee's water level is managed to provide a range of desired purposes including, flood protection, water supply and environmental protection using “regulation schedules.” A new regulation schedule for the Lake was formally adopted in July 2000 by the SFWMD and the USACE. The schedule, referred to as WSE (Water Supply and Environment),

provides increased operational flexibility relative to earlier schedules. The WSE schedule has multiple operational zones in which discharges at higher lake stages are determined based on meteorological forecasts, climate outlooks, effects to ecosystems, and review of regional hydrologic conditions. Technical information is provided by an interdisciplinary group of scientists, engineers, and resource managers and release decisions are made by the USACE, following guidelines established by the WSE regulation schedule. Adaptive protocols describe the process for implementing the opportunities for operational flexibility that exist in the WSE schedule (*SFWMD, 2002a*).

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - CRITICAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

Lake Okeechobee Water Retention / Phosphorus Removal

The project consists of design and construction of stormwater treatment areas (STAs) in the Taylor Creek Basin (200 acres) and in the Nubbin Slough Basin (1,100 acres) and the restoration of isolated wetland sites on several agricultural parcels in the Okeechobee watershed. The purpose of the project is to capture and attenuate peak flows from portions of the watershed and to improve water quality. The total project cost is estimated to be \$16.3 million according to the project cooperation agreement entered into by the SFWMD and the USACE on January 7, 2000. More information is available regarding this critical project at www.saj.usace.army.mil/projects/index.html.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - LAKE OKEECHOBEE

Lake Okeechobee is a Class I water body (potable water supply) according to Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) rule. Class I water bodies generally have the most stringent surface water quality and pollution control criteria in Florida. However, water quality data for Lake Okeechobee indicate that the lake is in a eutrophic condition, primarily due to excessive nutrient loads from agricultural sources both north and south of the lake.

The main tributary to Lake Okeechobee is the Kissimmee River. As stated above, several water bodies within the Kissimmee River Watershed, including segments of the river itself, are impaired to various levels. Degradation of water quality in the Kissimmee River Watershed contributes to downstream degradation in Lake Okeechobee. Lower reaches of the Kissimmee River contribute high levels of nutrient loading to Lake Okeechobee.

Another important tributary to the lake is the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Basin. The Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Basin contributes high levels of nutrient loading, low levels of DO and elevated coliform bacteria and turbidity levels to the lake. The Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Basin contributes only 4 percent of the total volume of inflows to Lake Okeechobee, but accounts for approximately 29 percent of the total phosphorus inflow loads.

Eight segments of Lake Okeechobee are also included on the Section 303(d) list. Water quality parameters/criteria causing impairment at eight different monitoring locations in Lake Okeechobee include: excessive nutrients, low levels of DO and high concentrations of unionized ammonia, iron, chlorides and coliform bacteria. The Fisheating Creek and C-41 basins on the northwest side of the lake also contribute pollutants, causing impairment in Lake Okeechobee.

Water quality in Lake Okeechobee is expected to slowly improve between 2003 and 2050. Field and laboratory studies of phosphorus stored in lake sediments indicate that sediment bound phosphorus is a dominant pollutant affecting lake water quality (Reddy et al., 1995). Currently, the average cumulative phosphorus load to the lake exceeds the P TMDL target by approximately 400 tons per year (SFWMD, 2002b). Phosphorus loads to the lake eventually become sequestered in lake sediments. The phosphorus in these sediments, which has accumulated over time from excessive external loads, is frequently resuspended (primarily by wind-aided mixing; Havens, 1997) and will tend to maintain a high phosphorus concentration in the water column, even if all sources of phosphorus in the contributing watershed are controlled consistent with regulatory and watershed management programs. Although short-term water quality conditions in Lake Okeechobee are not expected to improve, in place pollutant reduction programs in the lower Kissimmee River and Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough basins are expected to result in long-term reduction in Lake Okeechobee water column nutrient concentrations.

Urban development in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed and nonpoint source pollution loading associated with urban storm water runoff is not expected to increase significantly by 2050.

LAND USE - LAKE OKEECHOBEE REGION

Lake Okeechobee has traditionally been a key source of water supply for irrigated crops around the lake including the EAA, the Caloosahatchee River Basin and Martin and St. Lucie counties (Upper East Coast). Continued access to this source of water is considered vital to sustaining agriculture in the surrounding regions.

Agriculture

The area is rural in character, with most lands dedicated to agriculture. Sugarcane is the predominant crop in the south, row crops and sugarcane in the east and pasture land with dairy production in the north. Urban areas, which are generally few and modest in population, service the agriculture sector, as well as the tourists who come to the lake to fish, hunt and enjoy other recreational pursuits.

Urban

A significant use of land outside the agricultural context is for urban development. Six incorporated communities are situated around the lake and range in population from approximately 1,400 to 16,000.

The Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation occupies a large area of land west of the lake in Glades County. The southern end of this reservation is near the Herbert Hoover Dike just north of Lakeport.

Major transportation corridors around the perimeter of Lake Okeechobee include several highways and railroads. County Road 78 parallels the lake along its western and northern shores from Moore Haven to Okeechobee. From Okeechobee, State Highway 98/ 441 follows the northern and eastern portion of the lake to Pahokee. County Road 715 then follows the Herbert Hoover Dike from Pahokee to Belle Glade, where State Highway 27 follows the southern lake area back to Moore Haven and County Road 78. In many cases, these highways are within 1.6 kilometers (one mile) of the Herbert Hoover Dike, and are often within 15 meters (50 feet).

Railroad corridors in the Lake Okeechobee area include the Florida East Coast Railway and the South Central Florida Railroad. The East Coast Railway is located along the eastern part of the lake where it comes very near to the Herbert Hoover Dike. The South Central Florida Railroad travels along the southern end of the lake, where it comes within 1.6 kilometers (one mile) of the Herbert Hoover Dike.

ELIGIBLE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN (CERP) PROJECTS

Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project

The Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project consists of four separable elements including: North of Lake Okeechobee Storage Reservoir, Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Storage and Treatment Area, Lake Okeechobee Watershed Water Quality Treatment Facilities and Lake Okeechobee Tributary Sediment Dredging. These components were combined for an opportunity to generate a more efficient design of the components and address the interdependencies and trade-offs between the different components. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org.

OTHER ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Okeechobee County

With the required Storm Water Management permits that will have to be obtained in the near future, a watershed plan update is essential to improving the overall goal of higher quality stormwater entering Lake Okeechobee. Currently, benchmark elevations are lacking throughout the County, and there is no thorough inventory of current water conveyance structures. These are necessary to develop the plan and to make the permit effective in achieving the highest stormwater quality feasible. The County needs to identify the major drainage problems throughout the County and to inventory the water conveyance system. These items should be computerized and modeled in order to correct or limit the impacts of high water and to improve the quality of stormwater runoff.

SFWMD, in conjunction with many other Federal and State agencies, has committed to improve the water quality in and around Lake Okeechobee. Taylor Creek has been considered by

SFWMD as both a source of lower water quality and a potential resource in efforts to improve the health of Lake Okeechobee. SFWMD believes that by removing the high nutrient sediment within virtually all waters of the Taylor Creek basin, the Lake's health will greatly improve. Planning and permitting this type of project is time consuming and costly. Phase I could include: planning, designing and permitting.

Potential Okeechobee County projects identified to provide flood control and water quality benefits include the following:

- Countywide Master Water Drainage Plan Update
- Storm Water Management Permit
- Taylor Creek Water Quality Improvement Project

Chapter 5

LOWER WEST COAST REGION

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS - LOWER WEST COAST REGION

The Lower West Coast Planning Area covers approximately 5,129 square miles in Lee, Hendry, Glades and Collier Counties and a portion of Charlotte and mainland Monroe counties, in addition to 1,205 square miles in the Big Cypress Basin (BCB) (**Figure 7**). This area is generally bounded by Charlotte County to the north, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) to the east, the Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) to the south, and the Gulf of Mexico to the west. The area is characterized by the sandy flatlands region of Lee County, which give way to sandy though more rolling terrain in Hendry County; and the coastal marshes and mangrove swamps of Collier County. The surface drainage of the region is primarily achieved by natural sloughs and man-made canals to the Caloosahatchee River, Estero Bay, Naples Bay, Rookery Bay, and the Faka Union Bay.

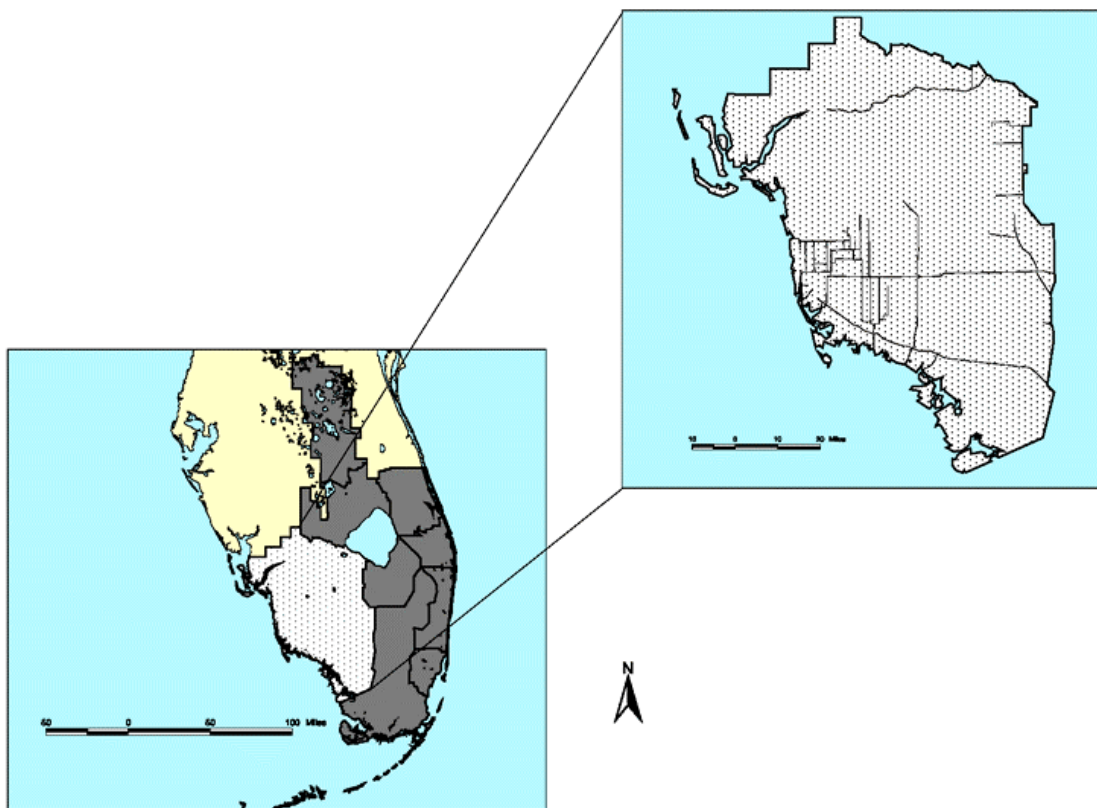


Figure 7. Lower West Coast Region.

The Caloosahatchee River Basin includes an area of 860 square miles (550,900 acres) in parts of Lee, Glades, Charlotte and Hendry counties. From a hurricane gate on the southwest shore of Lake Okeechobee at Moore Haven, the Caloosahatchee Canal drains westerly for about 5 miles through a very flat terrain into Lake Hicpochee. From there the canal joins the upper reach of the Caloosahatchee River. On its way to the Gulf of Mexico, the river is controlled by navigation locks at Ortona (15 miles downstream from Moore Haven) and at Olga near Fort Myers. Downstream from Ortona Lock, many tributaries join the river along its course to the gulf. The Caloosahatchee River serves as a portion of the cross-state Okeechobee Waterway, which extends from Stuart on the east coast via the St. Lucie Canal, through Lake Okeechobee and the Caloosahatchee River to Fort Myers on the Gulf of Mexico. The river has been straightened by channelization through most of its 65-mile course from the Moore Haven Lock to Fort Myers.

The J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex includes Pine Island NWR, Island Bay NWR, Matlacha Pass NWR and Caloosahatchee NWR, all located on the lower west coast. The health of the estuarine ecosystem they embody is directly tied to the water quality, quantity and timing of flows from the Caloosahatchee Watershed and those watersheds which drain into the Caloosahatchee River (i.e., Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee watersheds).

South of the Caloosahatchee River Basin, a tributary network of the Estero River and Imperial River drain to Estero Bay. The rapidly urbanizing area of western Collier County is primarily drained by a vast network of man-made canals presently operated and maintained by the Big Cypress Basin of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The characteristics of runoff – quantity, quality, and timing have been affected by an urbanized landscape.

Big Cypress Swamp spans approximately 1,205 square miles (771,000 acres) from southwest of Lake Okeechobee to the Ten Thousand Islands in the Gulf of Mexico. The 570,000-acre Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) was established by Public Law, 93- 440 in 1974, to protect natural and recreational values of the Big Cypress Watershed, and to allow for continued traditional uses, such as hunting, fishing and oil and gas production. It was also established to provide an ecological buffer zone and protect Everglades National Park’s (ENP) water supply. In 1988, Congress passed the BCNP Addition Act (Additions), which added 228 square miles (146,000 acres) to the preserve.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - LOWER WEST COAST REGION WATER MANAGEMENT

Inflows from Lake Okeechobee and runoff from within its own basin supply the Caloosahatchee River. The freshwater portion of the river (C-43 Canal) extends westward from Moore Haven, on Lake Okeechobee, through LaBelle, to the Franklin Lock and Dam (S-79). The C-43 Canal is part of the Lake Okeechobee Waterway, providing navigation between the east and west coasts of Florida. West of S-79, the river mixes freely with estuarine water as it empties into the Gulf of Mexico (SFWMD, 1995; SFWMD, 1997). C-43 is 45 miles long, averages 20 to 30 feet deep and ranges from 150 to 450 feet wide. The Ortona Lock and Dam (S-78), located approximately 27 miles upstream of S-79, separates the freshwater portion of the river into the East and West Caloosahatchee basins. Roughly 40 percent of the drainage area is in the east basin, and

the remaining 60 percent is in the west basin. The total drainage area to the river between S-77 and S-79 is about 880 square miles (CDM, 1991).

That portion of the Lower West Coast Region which is in the Caloosahatchee watershed is part of the Lake Okeechobee Service Area. The Lake Okeechobee Service Area subbasins lie at critical intermediary points in the water management system of South Florida. The needs of the Okeechobee subbasin for flood protection and drainage services affect inflows to the Caloosahatchee Estuary. Excessive discharges of freshwater to the Caloosahatchee Estuary are caused by regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee and runoff from each local watershed (SFWMD, 1997).

The Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule determines the timing and quantity of water that is released from the Lake into the Caloosahatchee River. The specific duration and temporal pattern of release is a function of Lake water surface elevation, season, and long and short term weather forecasts. When Lake surface elevation is within an acceptable range, pulsed releases, that mimic rainfall events, can be made to prevent the Lake level from rising. At higher Lake levels continuous releases of water are made until the Lake level falls within an acceptable range. The specific level of continuous release depends on the Lake level. The higher the level the higher the release. Maximum water releases to the Caloosahatchee may be up to 9,300 cubic feet per second (cfs).

Continuous discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries have caused documented negative effects on estuarine ecology (Chamberlain et al., 1995; Haunert and Startzman, 1985; Chamberlain and Hayward, 1996). Research has shown that prolonged releases, even at the modest rates, transform the estuarine systems into freshwater habitats within three to four weeks. The dramatic and rapid changes in salinity, and associated siltation caused by the release of suspended solids can produce long-term negative effects on these estuaries. High, continuous releases generate even more problems, because of greater potential for environmental disruption and associated public concern. Even with a thorough understanding of these major environmental concerns, flood control remains a major purpose of the man-made structures, and regulatory discharges are sometimes necessary because of the high risk of loss of life and property associated with high lake stages and hurricane generated waves and tides.

The Big Cypress Swamp is a recognized physiographic province in southwestern Florida. It is a source of recharge for the shallow aquifers of South Florida and is important to the integrity of the water resources in the western part of ENP. Congress recognized the hydrological features of the swamp and established BCNP. The water regimen of the area largely determines the patterns in which temperate and tropical vegetative communities and their related wildlife species occur. During the wet season (summer and fall) when heavy rains lead to widespread surface inundation, the almost imperceptible slope of the land creates an overland sheetflow. During the dry season (winter and spring) natural surface water flows are confined to the lower elevations of strands, swamps and sloughs. The BCNP has been mapped by the USFWS as part of the national wetlands inventory. The majority of BCNP lands are classified as wetlands; exceptions are scattered hardwood hammocks, some pinelands and artificially filled areas. The Big Cypress Region is essentially a rain-driven hydrologic unit, and for the most part, it is not dependent on adjacent land for water flow. Only three small areas (approximately five percent of the BCNP) receive flows from external drainages. These areas include less than 5 square miles in the Okaloacoochee Slough, about 30 square miles in the Mullet Slough component of the Everglades drainage, and approximately 40

square miles in the southeastern corner of the BCNP, along the western boundary of the Shark River Slough.

Problems Related to Water Management

During the annual November to April dry season, little water is released into the river from the Lake, resulting in low flows and low water levels in the upper Caloosahatchee. Several problems may develop as a consequence. Low flow may lead to development of an occasional severe algal bloom in the river above Franklin Lock (S- 79) and Dam. The City of Fort Myers and Lee County both have municipal water intakes in this area. Short-term high rates of discharge from Lake Okeechobee are used to break up the blooms by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) whenever requested by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District) (USACE, 1991). During the extreme driest months (April-May) river flow may drop to near zero. When this occurs, navigation lockages through the W. P. Franklin Lock (S-79) allow a saltwater wedge to move upstream. If salt intrusion is too severe, the SFWMD requests the USACE to flush out the saltwater with a short-term high rate of discharge from Lake Okeechobee. During a declared water shortage period, the SFWMD requests the USACE to go to reduced hours of lockages (USACE, 1991). In September 2001, a Minimum Flow and Level (MFL) for the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary went into effect. The MFL requires that certain salinity criteria are met down stream of S-79 at the Ft. Myers Yacht Basin. When water is available, low level environmental releases (300 cfs at S-79) can be made from the Lake to maintain a low salinity zone in the upper Caloosahatchee Estuary.

In South Lee County and the BCB, the continual over drainage by the canals has lead to large-scale draw-down of the groundwater aquifers and impaired salinity distribution in the estuaries of Estero Bay, Naples Bay, Rookery Bay, and Faka Union Bay.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - CRITICAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

Lake Trafford Restoration

Lake Trafford is located in north Collier County and is the largest lake south of Lake Okeechobee with a surface area of approximately 1,500 acres. It is the headwaters of the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary to the southwest, the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) to the west, and the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge to the south. Lake Trafford has poor water quality, extensive muck accumulations, loss of native submergent plant communities and numerous fish kills. The project involves removal of approximately 8.5 million cubic yards of loose, flocculent organic sediments that blanket the bottom of the lake and transport of these sediments to a sediment disposal site through a temporary pipeline. A project cooperation agreement was entered into by the SFWMD and the USACE on January 7, 2000. The implementation of the project is being delayed due to cost over-run above the original estimated construction cost. More information is available regarding this critical project at <http://www.evergladesplan.org>.

Southern CREW / Imperial River Flowway

The project is located in southern Lee County bordering the western boundary of the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW). The environmentally sensitive area east of Bonita Springs has been altered by the construction of roads, house pads, agricultural berms and ditches. These alterations have resulted in restriction of historical sheetflow, unnatural water impoundment and flooding, increased pollutant loading to the Imperial River and Estero River and disruption of natural wetland functions. The project involves acquisition of approximately 4,670 acres and restoration of historic sheetflow by removal of canal and road berms, home pads and ditches. The project also involves replacement of the Imperial Bonita Estates Bridge and modifications to the Kehl Canal Weir.

The project is divided into the following 3 phases: Phase I consists of construction of the Kehl Canal Weir Modification. Phase II consists of land acquisition and restoration of historic flows over Sections 25, 26, 35, 36 and the SE 1/4 of Section 24, T47S, R26E, approximately 2,720 acres. Phase III consists of land acquisition and restoration of historic flows over Sections 32, 33 and 34, T47S, R26E and the flowway starting at Section 32 downstream to Matheson Street, approximately 2,040 acres. The estimated project cost is \$26.1 million, of which \$12.1 million will be cost-shared under a PCA with the USACE and the remaining \$14 million for land acquisition will be cost-shared under a separate agreement with the United States Department of the Interior (USDOI). Additional information is available at <http://www.evergladesplan.org/>.

Western Tamiami Trail Culverts

The project is located on the Tamiami Trail (US 41) in Collier County between State Road (SR) 92 and 50 Mile Bend (a distance of approximately 43 miles). In 1928, the Tamiami Trail was completed between Miami and Naples. To obtain fill material for the roadbed, a borrow canal was excavated on the northern side of the road alignment. The effect of the Tamiami Trail and adjacent borrow canal has been to intercept existing north- south flowways to the BCNP and channels flows through a few bridges/culverts. The purpose of this project is to increase the number of north-south flowways by adding culverts at locations that will restore natural hydropatterns. The installation of approximately 80 culverts under Tamiami Trail and Loop Road will improve sheetflow of surface water within Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, BCNP and ENP. A project cooperation agreement was entered into by the SFWMD and the USACE. The implementation of the project is being phased due to cost over-run by the other critical restoration projects. The District will move forward with Phase I of the project which starts at SR 29 and goes west to CR 92. Additional information is available at <http://www.evergladesplan.org/>.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - LOWER WEST COAST REGION

The new Lake Okeechobee regulation schedules (Water Supply and Environment [WSE]) will have minimal impact on water quality conditions in the Caloosahatchee River/Estuary. In general, water quality conditions throughout the basin in the future without plan condition, are expected to be similar to current water quality conditions.

The District has identified the S-190 Structure (a gated culvert at the confluence of the North and West feeder canals) as a water control structure discharging into the Everglades Protection Area that requires an assessment of pollution loads and the development of a water quality improvement strategy. This strategy must be in accordance with the non-Everglades Construction Project (ECP) structures requirement of the Everglades Forever Act (EFA). SFWMD water quality data (SFWMD, 1998a) indicate that agricultural areas upstream of the Seminole Reservation, contribute significant nutrient loads (particularly phosphorus) into the canal system that drains into the North and West feeder canals and ultimately across the northeast corner of BCNP. Water quality improvements required under the EFA are to be completed by December 31, 2006, to assure that all water quality standards are met in the Everglades Protection Area.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - LOWER WEST COAST REGION

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) listed approximately 14 water body segments in the Caloosahatchee River Basin and in downstream coastal waters on its 1998 303(d) list. Water quality parameters of concern included excessive nutrients, coliform bacteria, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and depressed levels of dissolved oxygen (DO). The Caloosahatchee River Basin is a Group 3 basin in FDEP's Watershed management cycle and is currently being reassessed. The draft list for Caloosahatchee Basin (dated December 2002) now includes thirty water body segments potentially impaired for chlorophyll, DO, lead, mercury, fecal and total coliform, iron, copper, or biology.

As with the Big Cypress Basin discussed below, the number of monitoring locations in coastal waters of the region used to prepare the 303(d) list are inadequate to accurately characterize the extent of water quality degradation in coastal areas. The Charlotte Harbor Basin, which includes downstream waters of San Carlos Bay and Pine Island Sound, is a Group 2 basin; however, its verified list also remains draft. The draft Basin Status Report found insufficient data in many waterbody segments for determining impairment for nutrients. Extensive urban development (Fort Myers and vicinity, Cape Coral) at the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River contributes significant point and nonpoint source pollution loads into coastal canals and downstream into the Caloosahatchee Estuary.

In 2050, water quality conditions in the upper (eastern) and central portions of the watershed are expected to be unchanged compared to existing conditions. Water quality in downstream coastal areas is expected to decline as a result of increased population growth and urban and agricultural development. Water quality impacts from increased agricultural development are anticipated to be most readily observed in downstream areas of the watershed. The projected increase in population growth in urban areas of the Caloosahatchee River Basin is expected to exacerbate existing water quality problems in coastal waters, particularly those associated with wastewater discharges. Offsetting the coastal development and inland agricultural development water quality impacts is the implementation of a different regulatory schedule for Lake Okeechobee, which is expected to improve water quality conditions in the Caloosahatchee River and estuary by reducing the frequency and volume of large quantities of nutrient/sediment laden Lake Okeechobee flood regulation waters.

The Big Cypress Basin (the watershed of BCNP) includes agricultural areas west of the EAA, the Seminole Tribe's Big Cypress Reservation, most of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians' reservation lands, and developed areas of the west coast, including Naples and Marco Island. Twelve water body segments within the Big Cypress Basin were included on the FDEP 2002 303(d) list. Pollutants/constituents of concern include excessive nutrients (as indicated by chlorophyll-a), coliform bacteria, BOD, low levels of dissolved oxygen, iron, cadmium, and mercury (based on fish consumption advisories).

The L-28 Interceptor Canal, on the east side of the Big Cypress Basin within a Group 5 basin, was listed in the 1998 303(d) list as use-impaired due to elevated nutrient levels and low levels of DO. It should be further noted, that due to the scarcity of ambient monitoring sites in coastal waters of the basin, actual water quality problems are likely to be more severe in coastal waters, than as described in the FDEP 303(d) list, due to development pressure and point and nonpoint source pollution loading in developing areas.

Poor water quality and excessive drainage into the BCNP via the existing canal system constitute the most significant water quality impacts facing the BCNP, both now and in the future. It should be noted that the canals contributing pollutants into BCNP are not part of the C&SF Project. Existing pollution loads entering the BCNP from northwestern areas of the watershed (Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, C-139 Basin and C-139 Annex agricultural areas) are expected to be reduced in 2050 through the implementation of planned and ongoing water quality improvement projects.

LAND USE - LOWER WEST COAST REGION

Caloosahatchee River

The Caloosahatchee River Region has 161,862 acres of urban land, largely fixed single family units (77,208 acres) and an almost equal number of acres in some stage of construction. There are 374,924 acres of agriculture with improved and unimproved pastures (160,783 acres), citrus groves (104,105 acres) and sugarcane (84,067 acres) predominant. Various types of rangeland make up 51,847 acres of land use. The category of barren land has 10,249 acres. This includes spoil and borrow areas (6,651 acres) and rural land in transition (3,418 acres). Transportation, communication and utilities comprise 16,092 acres. (Acreage numbers are based on land use data developed by SFWMD, June 2003.)

Rangeland and agriculture dominate land use in the basin, particularly the upper portion. The freshwater portion of the Caloosahatchee River Region is mostly agricultural. The only urban areas are the cities of LaBelle, Alva and Moore Haven (CDM, 1991). Land use adjacent to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary is largely residential and urban with the city of Cape Coral on its northern bank and the highly urbanized city of Fort Myers on its south bank. Both of these communities have experienced rapid growth, with even more growth anticipated in the near future.

Agriculture

Glades and Lee counties are included in this region. Over one-half million acres are farmed in the Caloosahatchee River Basin, and approximately three-fourths of that area is pasture land (UFBEBR, 2002). Large farms averaging 700 acres, characterize the region, with relatively low productivity per acre (UFBEBR, 2002). Hendry County is one of the top six counties in Florida beef cattle herd numbers with Glades County ranking eighth in the state of Florida for cattle production (UFBEBR, 2002). Citrus production in the Caloosahatchee River Basin covers more than 20,000 acres (FASS, 2002). Much of this acreage is likely categorized as unique farmland based upon its location, growing season and high value citrus crops.

Almost 4,000 people are employed in agricultural production and services, and the payroll totals approximately \$75 million (UFBEBR, 2002). Agricultural products in this region have a total market value of more than \$174 million (UFBEBR, 2002).

More than 47,000 acres of farmland are irrigated in the Caloosahatchee River Basin (USGS, 2002). Reliable water supply is a major concern in this region, which has traditionally relied upon water deliveries through the Caloosahatchee River from Lake Okeechobee. Irrigation demands can be expected to increase as additional land is used for citrus production.

Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP)

Roadways in South Florida often obtain necessary road fill from excavation of a parallel canal, resulting in both an elevated obstruction to natural drainage patterns and rerouting of flow in open canals. Such drainage alterations in the BCNP include the Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41), Interstate 75 (Alligator Alley), County Route 839 (Turner River Road), County Route 841 (Birdon Road), County Route 94 (Loop Road) and numerous smaller roads. State Road 29, a north-south road, parallels the western boundary just outside of the BCNP, although its borrow canal is just within the boundary of the BCNP. Extending northward from the Tamiami Trail along the eastern boundary of the BCNP, the L-28 Levee forms the boundary between the Everglades and Big Cypress drainage. Although the levee is located immediately outside of the BCNP boundary, it is significant to the hydrology of the BCNP. The L-28 Interceptor Canal cuts through the extreme northeastern corner of the BCNP. This canal rapidly drains the agriculturally active lands north of the BCNP.

Oil and gas are currently produced from two active fields in the BCNP. A portion of the Bear Island field lies within the Okaloacoochee Slough in the northwestern corner of the BCNP. The Raccoon Point field is located in the northeastern corner of the original BCNP and north of the Jetport site.

The Miami-Dade-Collier Transition and Training Airport, popularly known as the Jetport, occupies a 32 square mile site just north of the Tamiami Trail and adjacent to the eastern boundary of the BCNP. Although originally intended as an international airport, it is currently used only for limited training activities. Construction required 3 million cubic yards of fill excavated from 7 pits, ranging from 30 to 40 feet deep and covering 65 acres of surface area just west and south of the Jetport runways. Since all structures must be elevated above the seasonal high water levels, fill material must be excavated from borrow pits. Numerous such pits exist within the BCNP, ranging in size and depth, depending upon the extent of the development.

Off-road vehicle (ORV) usage in the BCNP is regulated by the National Park Service and is permitted by the enabling legislation to the extent that it does not significantly harm the environment. Areas open to use are designated and permits are required, with a maximum of 2,000 permits to be issued per year. The Preserve is currently transitioning to a designated trail system wherein ORV use will be permitted only on designated trails. In areas where the trails are in place, users are restricted to them. In areas where trails are not yet in place, access may still be limited, and access will be from designated points only. Approximately 50 miles out of a planned 400 miles of trails are currently designated.

Some 38,700 acres, totaling six percent of the BCNP's original boundary, are non-federal lands. These non-federal lands consist of 12,236 acres of School Board lands, including one section in each township set aside for schools; 23,488 acres of Jetport Authority lands; 1,514 acres of county roads; and 1,271 acres of private lands. Non-federal lands within the Additions have not yet been completely defined.

Agriculture within the original boundary of the BCNP is minimal. Farming is known to be more extensive within the Additions, but until the lands are formally transferred to the federal government, these agriculturally-impacted areas will not be completely defined.

Five active “life” leases, cover grazing rights on approximately 29,000 acres in the northwestern corner of the original preserve. All leases are located north of Alligator Alley. The leases can only be renewed by the permittee or spouse and are not transferable. These are gradually being phased out as lessees curtail operations or leases are relinquished.

Public Law (P.L.) 93-440 provides that members of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida shall be permitted, subject to reasonable regulations established by the Secretary, to continue their usual and customary use and occupancy of federal or federally acquired lands and waters within the BCNP, including hunting, fishing, trapping on a subsistence basis and traditional tribal ceremonies.

Urban Areas

Naples, Marco Island and Everglades City comprise the three largest urban areas within the Big Cypress Region. All three cities are on the west coast, and Naples is among the fastest growing urban areas in the United States. It has developed into a significant retirement destination with extensive residential and business center construction. Water supply demands to meet this fast growing and developing urban area are rapidly increasing.

Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve

The Fakahatchee Strand, located just west of the BCNP, is included in the area designated by the State of Florida as an Area of Critical State Concern. It is the recipient of the flow of the Okaloacoochee Slough, which cuts across the extreme northwestern corner of the BCNP and crosses under State Road 29 into the strand.

Southern Golden Gate Estates

West of the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve and south of Interstate 75 is the Southern Golden Gate Estates. The area was planned as a large residential subdivision and construction began in the 1960's. The building of roads and several drainage canals in this 94 square mile area has affected the areas environmental quality, by over-draining the watershed, sending harmful freshwater discharges to the estuaries, increasing frequency of forest fires and reducing aquifer storage (SFWMD, 1996).

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs)

The BCNP is bounded on the east by WCA-3A. Water is impounded in the Conservation Area and released to ENP and BCNP on predetermined schedules. The L-28 Levee forms the boundary between WCA-3A and the BCNP. The WCAs are managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, under contract to the SFWMD.

Everglades National Park (ENP)

The southern and portions of the eastern boundary of the BCNP abut ENP. The BCNP's southern boundary forms a "stair-step" pattern that distinguishes the wetland environment of the BCNP and the estuarine environment of the ENP. The Stair-Step area receives flows from the BCNP enroute to the estuarine environment of the ENP.

American Indian Reservations

Two American Indian reservations abut the BCNP. The Seminole Tribe is along the eastern part of the BCNP's northern boundary, and the Miccosukee Tribe is along the eastern boundary of the BCNP.

Agriculture

A persistent southward progression of agricultural development presents an external threat to the water quality and quantity of the Okaloacoochee Slough and Mullet Slough drainages. Expanding agricultural development is now located along the BCNP's northern boundary.

Hendry and Collier counties are included in this region. More than 800,000 acres are farmed in the Big Cypress Region, and almost half of that area is pasture land. The region is characterized by moderate to large farms producing more than \$600 per acre in market value (UFBEER, 1995). Hendry County ranks third in the state of Florida for cattle production (FASS, 1996a). Approximately 70,000 acres of sugar were harvested in 1996 (FASS, 1996d). Hendry County ranks third in the State for acres of citrus with over 100,000 acres, while Collier County is ninth with over 36,000 acres (FASS, 1996b). Citrus production in the Big Cypress Region is currently increasing. The Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation is located in this region along the northern boundary of the BCNP. The reservation includes some citrus groves and row crops, as well as pasture land.

More than 17,000 people are employed in agricultural production and services, and the payroll totals approximately \$16 million. Agricultural products in this region have a total market value of more than \$525 million. Hendry and Collier counties rank third and fourth in Florida for market value of agricultural products (UFBEBR, 1995).

ELIGIBLE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN (CERP) PROJECTS

C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir

This project is the first part of the C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir and ASR component. The project includes an above ground reservoir with a total storage capacity of approximately 160,000 acre-feet located in the C-43 Basin in Hendry, Glades or Lee Counties. The purpose of this project is to capture C-43 Basin runoff and releases from Lake Okeechobee. The reservoir will be designed for water supply benefits, some flood attenuation to provide environmental water supply deliveries to the Caloosahatchee Estuary, and water quality benefits to reduce salinity and nutrient impacts of runoff to the estuary. It is assumed that, depending upon the location of the reservoir and pollutant loading conditions in the watershed, the reservoir could be designed to achieve significant water quality improvements, consistent with appropriate pollution load reduction targets. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Caloosahatchee Backpumping with Stormwater Treatment Area

This project includes pump stations and a stormwater treatment area (STA) with a total capacity of approximately 20,000 acre-feet located in the C-43 Basin in Hendry and Glades Counties. The purpose of this feature is to capture excess C-43 Basin runoff, to be used to augment regional system water supply. Backpumping will only occur after estuary and agricultural/urban demands have been met in the basin, and when water levels in the C-43 storage reservoir exceed 6.5 feet above grade. Further, Lake Okeechobee water levels must be within a specified range to accept this water and not impact ecological resources. When these conditions are met, a series of pump stations will back-pump excess water from the reservoir and the C-43 Basin to Lake Okeechobee after treatment through a stormwater treatment area. The stormwater treatment area will be designed to meet Lake Okeechobee phosphorus and other pollutant load reduction targets consistent with the surface water improvement and management (SWIM) plan for the Lake, and targets that may be developed for the Lake and the watershed where the facility is to be built. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Southern Golden Gates Estates Hydrologic Restoration

This project includes a combination of spreader channels, canal plugs, road removal and pump stations in the lower west coast region, south of I-75 and north of U.S. 41 between the Belle Meade Area and the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve. The purpose of this project is to restore and enhance the wetlands in Golden Gate Estates and in adjacent public lands by reducing over drainage. Implementation of the restoration plan will also improve the water quality of coastal estuaries by moderating the large salinity fluctuations caused by freshwater point discharge of the Fakahatchee Union

Canal. The plan will also aid in protecting the City of Naples' eastern Golden Gate wellfield by improving groundwater recharge. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Big Cypress / L-28 Interceptor Modifications

This project includes modification of levees and canals, water control structures, pumps, stormwater treatment areas with a total storage capacity of 7,600 acre-feet located within and adjacent to the Miccosukee and Seminole Indian Reservations in Collier and Hendry Counties. The initial design of the stormwater treatment areas assumed a total acreage of 1,900 acres with the water level fluctuation up to 4 feet above grade. Conceptual sizes of the stormwater treatment areas were based on interim phosphorus concentration targets in the conceptual plan for the Everglades Construction Project. The final size, depth and configuration of this facility, including the stormwater treatment areas, will be determined through more detailed planning and design. Design of the stormwater treatment areas will be based on water quality criteria of the Seminole Tribe and criteria applicable to Big Cypress National Preserve, as appropriate. The purpose of this project is to reestablish sheetflow from the West Feeder Canal across the Big Cypress Reservation and into the Big Cypress National Preserve, maintain flood protection on Seminole Tribal lands, and ensure that inflows to the North and West Feeder Canals meet applicable water quality standards.

OTHER ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Belle Meade Acquisition Project

This project includes some of the most extensive examples of old-growth wet flatwoods (hydric pine flatwoods) in southwest Florida, and high quality, undisturbed subtropical dwarf cypress savanna communities, a plant community type endemic to southern Florida not within other projects. The hydrology of the hydric pine flatwoods and dwarf cypress communities within the project is relatively intact. The project will protect habitat for at least 20 FNAI-listed plants and animals, including the Florida panther, red-cockaded woodpecker, and Florida black bear. Three archaeological sites have been recorded within the project boundaries, and other sites may be present. The project is vulnerable to changes in the timing and amount of water flowing through it. Residential and commercial development spreading from Naples is the primary threat. This project is adjacent to and will enhance the effectiveness of the Southern Golden Gate Estates Hydrologic Restoration project by allowing continuous water flow over a wider area. Acquisition, especially in the South Belle Meade area will also enhance Collier-Seminole State Park and provide water quality benefits to the Ten Thousand Islands Estuary system.

Charlotte Harbor Watershed Initiatives

Charlotte Harbor is America's 17th-largest and Florida's second largest open water estuary. It has a broad barrier island chain, large parts of which are in public ownership; its mangrove shoreline is largely intact and in public management. It is the site of three National Wildlife Refuges, and four aquatic preserves. It is bordered by three counties (Lee, Charlotte, and Sarasota), each of which is in full compliance with Florida's Growth Management Act.

The Harbor, however, needs significant and sustained investment in water resource restoration. Divided between two districts, the Southwest and South Florida Water Management Districts, the Harbor has long been recognized as needing reestablishment of its hydrologic regime. This was first identified in the Governor and Cabinet's Charlotte Harbor Resource Planning and Management Plan (1982), the Southwest Florida Water Management District's SWIM Plan (1992), and the National Estuary Program's Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (2000). The South Florida Water Management District has a SWIM Plan pending for the part of the Harbor within the jurisdiction of Lee County. Capital projects for surface water restoration and estuarine restoration and assessment include:

- Restore Spoil Islands in the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary
- Restore native vegetative mosaic in the Charlotte Harbor State Buffer Preserve through removal of exotic vegetation
- Environmental Clean-up and improved drainage in Powell Creek and Gator Slough.
- Wetland Restoration at Sanibel Gardens
- Capital Improvements to Burnt Store Road
- Restoration of Shell Fish in Charlotte Harbor
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration and Assessment
- Re-establishing Mangroves along Disturbed Shorelines
- Fisheries Enhancement and Assessment: Lower Charlotte Harbor
- Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program cost match
- Benthic Community-Based Calibration of Water Quality Parameters in the Caloosahatchee River/Estuary
- Hydrologic Restoration of the Dewitt Preserve, Sanibel
- **Loveland / Westchester Storm water Improvement Project**
- Stump Pass Sand Transfer Project
- **Sanibel-Captiva Road Culvert Connection Project**
- Highlands Weir Hydroperiod Restoration Project
- Coastal Cleanup and Monofilament Madness

Caloosahatchee River Watershed Initiatives

The Caloosahatchee River extends 105 kilometers (km) from Lake Okeechobee to San Carlos Bay. The freshwater systems of the Caloosahatchee River are divided into two distinct hydrologic units, East and West Basins. These basins include parts of Lee, Charlotte, Collier, Glades, and Hendry Counties. The Tidal Caloosahatchee Basin includes portions of Lee and Charlotte Counties. The estuary length between Franklin Lock and Shell Point is 42 km and is bordered by Fort Myers on the south shore and Cape Coral on the north shore. Water discharges

from the Caloosahatchee passes Shell Point and enters the Gulf of Mexico at San Carlos Bay. Because of the irregular, long, slender shape of the system, slight changes in wind, tide, runoff, or precipitation can have dramatic effects on several estuarine features such as flow, water depth, salinity, and turbidity.

In past years the District and its partners have completed the Caloosahatchee Water Management Plan that balances the three components of flooding, water supply and environmental preservation. The District has lead the effort for environmental restoration of rivers and creeks in the basin by removing exotic vegetation and protecting lands in the headwaters of Okaloacoochee Basin through land acquisition.

Surface water and estuarine restoration capital projects and assessments are designed to provide water quality, flood control, and wildlife habitat benefits. They include the following projects:

- City of LaBelle Stormwater Retrofits
- LaBelle Nature Park
- Cecil Webb WMA
- Telegraph Cypress Water Management
- Harn's Marsh Lehigh Acres
- ELCARP East Lee County Aquifer Recharge Program
- Fiesta Village Reuse Automation System
- Northern Wellfield for City of Cape Coral
- City of Clewiston – Stormwater Treatment Improvements
- Western Acres Storm Water System Retrofit
- Spacial Modeling to Determine Optimal Freshwater Inflows into Estuarine Habitats
- Caloosahatchee Oxbow Restoration
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Restoration

Lake Istokpoga

Florida's fifth largest lake, lies within the boundary of Highlands County and of the South Florida Water Management District. The lake, ringed by highly valued cypress and unique upland habitat, is home to one of Florida's largest breeding communities of Osprey. In addition to its beauty and ecological importance, Lake Istokpoga also plays an important role in the economy of rural Highlands County, bringing many winter visitors and retirees to the area to fish for elusive striped bass and other prized game fish.

However, due to residential growth surrounding the lake and a regulation schedule that allows little fluctuation, Lake Istokpoga is subject to long periods of high water that impair the

health of this valuable resource. As community outreach efforts in this area have moved forward, it has become clear that in order to preserve the health of Lake Istokpoga while retaining access for those who live nearby, it is necessary to remove sediments that have impaired navigation in many of the residential canals and to deepen some of these canals. This will allow SFWMD and Corps of Engineers staff greater flexibility as we once again consider alteration of the current lake level regulation schedule for Lake Istokpoga.

The Western Basins

Four watersheds located in South Central Florida are collectively known as the Western Basins Area. These basins are comprised of over 430,000 acres of mostly agricultural lands that discharge into the Everglades Protection Area. There are currently two regulatory programs in the Western Basins that are driven by the Everglades Forever Act (EFA): the Everglades Stormwater Program (ESP) and the C-139 Basin Program. Both are aimed at improving water quality by implementing farm best management practices (BMPs). The ESP includes a volunteer BMP program in the L-28, Feeder Canal, and the Gap or Tieback Basins, while the C-139 Basin Program is a mandatory BMP program based on a rule adopted for that particular basin in accordance with the EFA. Participating as partners in the proposed Western Basins Watershed Initiative are the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), Hendry Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS).

Several options to reduce nutrient loading for these watersheds were explored. One was voluntary implementation of BMPs for farms and ranches, but it did not include a financial incentive. Even though this may have resulted in some nutrient reduction, many cattle ranches were either not interested or not able to participate given their economic difficulties. Another option for basins other than the C-139 would have required a lengthy rulemaking process and, while this may occur in the future, this option will take several years to develop. The Western Basins Watershed Initiative program can result in immediate load reductions and assist the landowners in compliance with future regulations and rules. Without the financial incentive, implementation of BMPs in the Western Basins and reductions in nutrient loading to the Everglades will most likely be delayed several years.

The SFWMD and the Hendry Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) have agreed to participate in this cooperative agreement with the understanding of the need to develop fair and equitable processes in the selection of lands and landowners for the project. The partnership provides the technical assistance to design on-farm conservation plans, develop water quality improvement strategies, and implement appropriate BMPs in the Western Basin Area. The Western Basins Watershed Initiative creates an incentive to local landowners and stakeholders, who effectively implement pre-approved water quality improvement strategies and BMPs. The following capital projects for surface water restoration have been identified:

- C-139 and Feeder Canal Basins Surface Water System and Reservoir Projects for the Construction of 6 extensive surface water systems in the Western Basins Watershed Initiative Area to treat over 50,000 acres of agriculture lands within the C-139 and Feeder Canal Basins.

- C-139 Basin Sediment and Vegetation Removal from main conveyance system to result in the removal of sediments and vegetation from 20 miles of canal including a critical area adjacent to Stormwater Treatment Area 5 (STA5) that serves as a regional best management practice that helps the entire basin achieve compliance with quality standards.

Estero Bay Watershed

The Estero Bay Basin, a priority watershed, extends from the Cocohatchee Canal/River Watershed in Collier County north to the Caloosahatchee Watershed in Lee County, with the Immokalee Ridge in Collier County as the easterly edge and the Bay as the westerly boundary. The Basin covers approximately 400 square miles and contains the Imperial River, Estero River, Halfway Creek, Spring Creek -- all classified as Outstanding Florida Waters; and Mullock Creek/Ten Mile Canal/Six Mile Slough, Hendry Creek, and Cow Slough. Accomplishments include:

- Environmental Restoration of rivers and creeks in the basin by removing exotic vegetation
- Reconnection of the historical flow way for Halfway Creek
- Replacement of undersized Imperial Bonita Estates Bridge on the Imperial River
- Replacement of temporary weir on the Kehl Canal with an operable structure
- Preservation of historical flow way to the Cocohatchee Canal through the permitting process
- Completion of the Six Mile Cypress Watershed Plan and partial implementation by re-establishing historical flow way corridors through developer contributions and Lee County/ SFWMD projects

Additional capital projects identified to provide water quality, surface water restoration and flood protection benefits include:

- City of Bonita Springs Stormwater Retrofits
- 10 Mile Canal Filter Marshes
- Restoration of Imperial River Flowway
- Restoration of Southern CREW
- Stabilization of River and Creek Banks
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Restoration
- Restoration of Shellfish and Fish Habitat in Estero Bay Aquatic and State Buffer Preserve

Naples Bay Initiative

Naples Bay is a perfect example of a pristine estuary undergoing drastic ecologic deterioration due to rapid urbanization in its primary watershed. It is a relatively narrow and shallow estuarine water body ranging in width from 100 to 1,500 feet, and in depth from one to 23 feet. Both the primary water inlets like Gordon River, Rock Creek and Haldeman Creek, and the historic flowways to the Bay have been altered by road and drainage development over the last forty years. Voluminous fresh water discharges through a large network of human-made canals and stormwater outlets cause large fluctuations in the salinity levels and current patterns. This creates enormous shocks to the aquatic biota of the Bay, and often results in too little freshwater input to the surrounding saline areas. The rapid decline in salinity to near freshwater levels has caused prolonged salinity stresses and eliminated or displaced a high proportion of the benthic, midwater and fish plankton communities in the Bay. Suppressed plankton development has resulted in very low relative abundance of midwater fish and caused a considerable drop in shellfish harvest levels. Seagrass meadows are no longer prevalent in the Bay. Instead, bare sandy mud and algal areas predominate. The impact on commercial and recreational fisheries has been significant. Uncontrolled stormwater runoff and increased boat traffic in the navigational channel have also degraded water quality and aquatic biota.

The following capital projects have been identified to provide freshwater flow reduction, aquatic habitat restoration and water quality improvement benefits:

- Gordon River Basin Extension Stormwater Management Master Plan
- Gateway Triangle Storm water Management Plan
- Modification of Golden Gate Canal Weir #2
- Modification of I-75 Canal Weir #1
- Bathymetric mapping and Hydrodynamic Model Development of Naples Bay
- Restoration of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation in Naples Bay

Four Corners

The Four Corners project is a flood protection project located at the intersection of Hendry, Lee, Glades and Charlotte Counties. The recognized land use within this planning boundary was predominately historical farming operations constructed prior to water quality requirements. To address this issue along with the water supply and flood control issues, as well as to develop a more regional solution, the project design was modified and expanded from the initial planning recommendations to one that includes among other features a wider swale/ flowway with control structures. The modified project design results in improved flow velocities resulting in significant water quality benefits over existing conditions. The changes are also expected to improve storage within the basin, increase the water recharge to the aquifer and effect water quality improvements to the Caloosahatchee River, a system under consideration for TMDL development by the DEP. The project achieves these additional benefits while meeting its primary objective of resolving the recurring drainage and flood control problems in the Spanish Creek, Jack's Branch, Bee Branch, Ft. Denaud Branch, and Cypress Creek. The project is a recommendation in the Hendry County Surface

Water Management Plan, Four Corners Area and has the support of the four counties as well as stakeholders in the region.

Chapter 6

UPPER EAST COAST REGION

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS - UPPER EAST COAST REGION

The Upper East Coast Region encompasses approximately 1,139 square miles and includes most of Martin and St. Lucie counties, as well as a portion of eastern Okeechobee County (**Figure 8**). Martin and St. Lucie counties are bounded to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, and Lake Okeechobee borders a substantial portion of Martin County. Urban development is primarily located along the coastal areas while the central and western portions are used primarily for agriculture where the main products are citrus, truck crops, sugarcane and beef and dairy products.

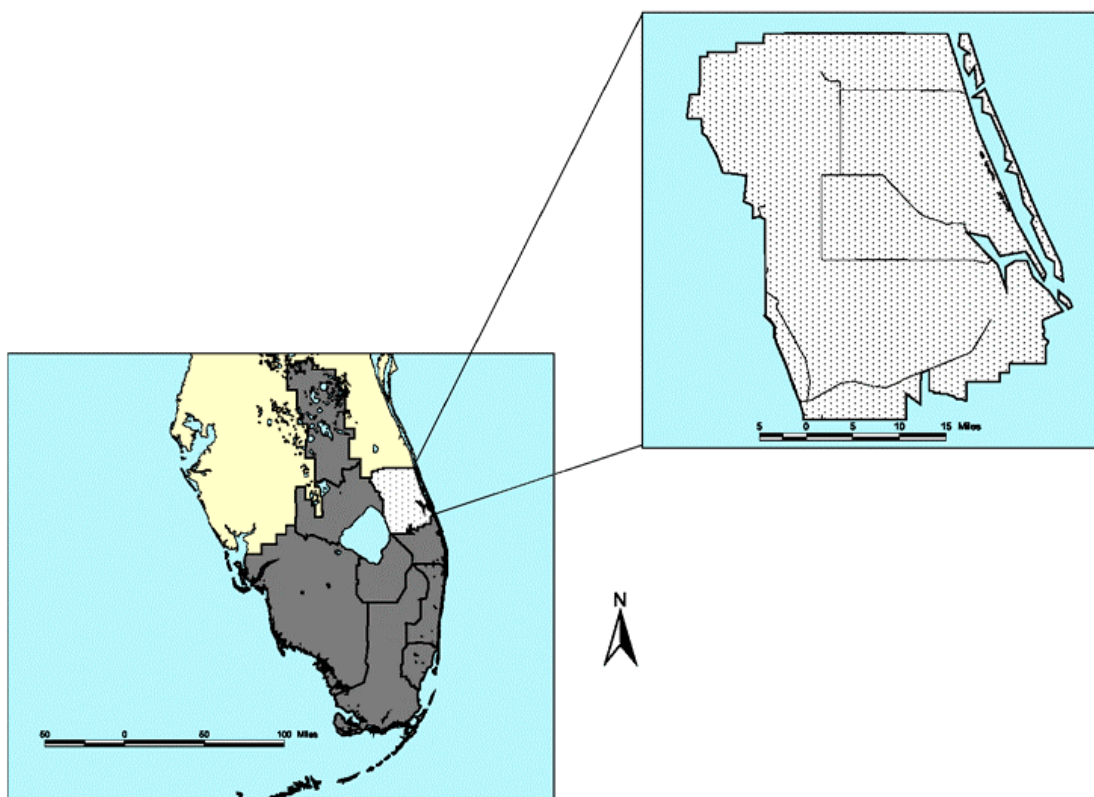


Figure 8. Upper East Coast Region.

The land is generally flat, ranging in elevation from 15 to 60 feet NGVD (National Geodetic Vertical Datum) in the western portion with an average elevation of 28 feet. The coastal area ranges from sea level to 25 feet. The coastal sand hills adjacent to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway are higher than most parts of the county and reach a maximum elevation of 60 feet. This feature is known as the Atlantic Coastal Ridge.

The natural drainage has been significantly altered by the construction of canals, drainage ditches and numerous water control structures, which predominately direct storm water discharge to the east coast. The area contains the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project (C&SF Project) canals C-23, C-24 and C-25 drainage basins and the drainage area served by C-44 (St. Lucie Canal).

The St. Lucie Canal is Lake Okeechobee's eastern outlet, extending 25.5 miles from Port Mayaca to the city of Stuart, where it terminates at the South Fork of the St. Lucie River. The St. Lucie River Basin is part of a much larger southeastern Florida basin that drains over 8,000 square miles. The St. Lucie River, composed of the North and South forks, lies in Martin and St. Lucie counties in the northeastern portion of the basin. The South Fork is a relatively short stretch of river. The North Fork, designated as an aquatic preserve by the state of Florida, begins south of Fort Pierce and flows past the city of Port St. Lucie to the St. Lucie River Estuary.

The St. Lucie Estuary is part of a larger estuarine system known as the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). The lagoon has been designated an estuary of national significance and is a component of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) sponsored National Estuary program. The lagoon is also designated as a state priority water body for protection and restoration under the state's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Act. The SWIM plan identifies excessive freshwater runoff from the St. Lucie Estuary Watershed as a problem within the St. Lucie Estuary.

Much of the St. Lucie River has been channelized and many drainage canals empty into the river, particularly the St. Lucie Canal, C-23 and C-24. The St. Lucie Canal, the largest overflow canal for Lake Okeechobee, is a navigation channel 8 feet deep and 100 feet wide connecting the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway in Stuart with Lake Okeechobee at Port Mayaca.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - UPPER EAST COAST WATER MANAGEMENT

The St. Lucie Estuary is located on the southeast coast of Florida, encompassing portions of both Martin and St. Lucie counties within the watershed. The two forks of the St. Lucie Estuary, the North Fork and South Fork, flow together near the Roosevelt Bridge at the city of Stuart, and then flow eastward approximately 6 miles to the IRL and Atlantic Ocean at the St. Lucie Inlet. Tidal influences in the North Fork reach 15 miles north of Stuart in Five-Mile Creek, and to a water control structure on Ten-Mile Creek just west of the Florida Turnpike at Gordy Road. Tidal influences in the South Fork extend about 8 miles south of Stuart to the St. Lucie Lock and Dam on the St. Lucie Canal. Tidal influence also extends into the extremes of the nearby Old South Fork tributary (Morris, 1987).

The estuary is divided into three major areas, the inner estuary, composed of the North and South forks; the mid-estuary, consisting of the area from the juncture of the North and South forks to Hell's Gate, and the outer estuary extending from Hell's Gate to the St. Lucie Inlet. The main body of the North Fork is about 4 miles long, with a surface area of approximately 4.5 square miles and a total volume of 998.5×10^6 cubic feet at mean sea level. The South Fork is approximately half the size of the North Fork with a surface area of about 1.9 square miles and a volume of 468.7×10^6

cubic feet. The mid- estuary extends approximately 5 miles from the Roosevelt Bridge to Hell's Gate and has an area and volume similar to the North Fork (4.7 square miles and 972.7×10^6 cubic feet) (Haunert and Startzman, 1985).

Surface sediment composition within the estuary has been mapped by the SFWMD (Haunert, 1988). Sediment composition within the St. Lucie Estuary is influenced by hydrodynamics and is somewhat correlated to depth. Sand substrates, with little organic content, are found along the shallow shorelines of the estuary and in the St. Lucie Canal. This reflects the impacts of wave turbulence and rapid currents. Substrates comprised of mud and moderate quantities of sand are present in areas that are more typically low energy environments, but subjected to occasional high energy events. Mud substrates are found in low energy areas, such as dredged areas and the deeper portions of the estuary. These mud sediments often contain high concentrations of organic materials.

While the estuary encompasses about 8 square miles, the watershed covers an area of almost 775 square miles. The watershed is divided into eight basins; five major basins and three minor ones. Three of these major basins, the C-23, C-24 and C-44, represent basins now linked to the estuary by components of the Central and South Florida Flood Control Project. In addition to drainage from within the C-44 Basin, the C-44 Canal (St. Lucie Canal) also conveys flood control discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie Estuary. The other two major basins, the North Fork, and Tidal Basin, include numerous connections to the St. Lucie Estuary.

Agricultural drainage and residential development have extensively modified the watershed of the entire St. Lucie Estuary. One major effect of these man-made alterations in the landscape and water management practices is increased drainage, manifested by a lowered groundwater table and dramatic changes in how storm water runoff is introduced to the estuary. Typically, when a watershed is highly drained, like the St. Lucie Estuary Watershed, all three runoff factors (quality, quantity and timing) are negatively affected. From a yearly cycle perspective, the quantity of water drained to the estuary is increased, the water quality is degraded and the seasonal distribution of runoff is altered, such that dry season flows are of less magnitude and frequency and wet season flows are of greater magnitude and more frequent. The vast majority of runoff occurs within the first three days after a rainfall event, rather than over an extended period of time. Water quality is degraded, especially by increased amounts of nutrients and suspended solids. The increased nutrients in the St. Lucie Estuary have increased primary productivity within the system to the point where unhealthy levels of dissolved oxygen (DO) occur on a regular basis in the inner estuary.

The dramatic increase in sediment load has contributed significantly to the build- up of muck throughout the system. The sandy sediment loads, like those that build up in the Palm City area, are from primarily high discharge events. However, it is the increased organics coming from high levels of chlorophyll a and floating aquatics, introduced from the canals combining with highly organic fine suspended sediments that flocculate out at the freshwater-saltwater interface, that lead to the formation of muck. As a result, the benthic environment of the estuary is a favorable habitat for mostly pollution tolerant organisms. In addition, the rapid introduction of freshwater causes salinity fluctuations that are not conducive to developing or maintaining a healthy estuarine plant and animal community. The overall result of these changes is the loss of important habitats.

The St. Lucie Estuary has received increased inflows over the last 100 years because of these modifications to the watershed. Extreme salinity fluctuations and ever- increasing inflows have

contributed to major changes in the structure of the communities within the estuary, such as seagrass and oyster losses. Phillips (1961) described the marine plants in the St. Lucie Estuary. At the time, mangroves were abundant in the North and South forks and seagrasses, although stressed, were still found in many areas of the estuary. Today, the presence of seagrasses is severely limited and ephemeral. Oyster populations in the estuary are virtually nonexistent due to the continual exposure to low salinities and lack of suitable substrate (clean hard objects) for larval recolonization (Haunert and Startzman, 1980 and 1985).

Regulatory discharges from the C-44 Canal have been documented to adversely impact the St. Lucie Estuary by depressing the salinity range far below the normal range, and by transporting large quantities of suspended materials into the estuary. Sedimentation problems in relation to C-44 Canal discharges were recognized as early as the 1950's (Gunter and Hall, 1963). While current monthly average flows from the watershed to the St. Lucie Estuary seldom exceed 2,500 cubic feet per second (cfs), regulatory releases from the C-44 Canal alone have produced flows in excess of 7,000 cfs. The quantity of suspended solid material passing Structure S-80 has reached a peak of 8,000 tons a day when daily discharges reached near 7,000 cfs in 1983. Much of this material passes through the estuary and into the IRL or Atlantic Ocean (Haunert, 1988). It was recognized then that these discharges transported sand, as well as very fine, organic rich suspended material to the estuary.

Surface Water Resources

Prior to development, most of the Upper East Coast Planning Area was characterized by nearly level, poorly drained lands subject to frequent flooding. The natural surface drainage systems included large expanses of sloughs and marshes, such as St. Johns Marsh, Allapattah Slough (also referred to as Allapattah Flats) and Cane Slough. Drainage systems with higher conveyance included the North and South forks of the St. Lucie River, Ten Mile Creek, Five Mile Creek, the Loxahatchee River and Bessey Creek. Minor creeks include Danforth, Fraiser, Hidden River, Willoughby, Krueger, Mapps and Warner. Most of these surface water systems, especially those with poor drainage, have been altered to make the land suitable for development and to provide flood control.

Since the early 1900s, numerous water control facilities have been constructed to make this region suitable for agricultural, industrial and residential use. The St. Lucie Canal (C-44) was constructed between 1916 and 1924 to provide an improved outlet for Lake Okeechobee floodwaters. From 1918 to 1919, the Fort Pierce Farms Drainage District (FPFDD) and the North St. Lucie River Drainage District (NSLRDD) were formed to provide flood control and drainage for citrus production in eastern and northeastern St. Lucie County. The C-25 Canal (also known as Belcher Canal) provided a drainage outlet for the FPFDD, as well as limited flood protection for western areas of the basin. The C-24 Canal (also known as the Diversion Canal) provided drainage and limited flood protection west of the NSLRDD protection levee. The C-23 Canal provided water control in Allapattah Flats during the dry season. However, large areas continued to be under water for months at a time during the wet season.

Although the primary function of the C&SF Project was for flood control and drainage, the drainage network formed by the C&SF Project canals and the secondary canals and ditches has become an important source of irrigation water and frost protection for agriculture. In general, water

stored in the canals is replenished by rainfall, groundwater inflow and withdrawals from the Floridan Aquifer System (FAS) when needed.

Prior to the large-scale expansion of citrus in the 1960s, storage in the drainage network in St. Lucie County was adequate to meet irrigation demands. However, the drainage and development of the large marsh areas in western St. Lucie County have depleted much of the surface water storage. The lowering of water tables also reduced the amount of water in groundwater storage. The reduced surface and groundwater storage coupled with increased acreages of citrus have resulted in inadequate supplies of surface water to meet demands during droughts. Therefore, an equitable distribution of the available surface water in the C-23, C-24 and C-25 basins is maintained by limiting the invert elevation of irrigation culverts and the intake elevation of pumps to a minimum of 14.0 feet NGVD. Artesian well water from the FAS is used as an irrigation supplement when surface water supplies become limited. Due to the high mineral content of the Floridan aquifer, this water is generally blended with surface water before it is used as irrigation water.

Surface Water Inflow and Outflow

Within the Upper East Coast Planning Area basins, essentially all surface water inflows and outflows are derived from rainfall. The exception to this is the St. Lucie Canal (C-44), which also receives water from Lake Okeechobee. In addition, most of the flows and stages in the region's canals are regulated for water use and flood protection. The amount of stored water is of critical importance to both the natural ecosystems and the developed areas in the Upper East Coast Planning Area. Management of surface water storage capacity involves balancing two conflicting conditions. When there is little water in storage, drought conditions may occur during periods of insufficient rainfall. Conversely, when storage is at capacity, flooding may occur due to excessive rainfall, especially during the wet season. Management of surface water systems is one of the main factors affecting movement of water through the regional hydrologic cycle.

Groundwater Resources

A distinctive feature of South Florida's hydrologic system is the aquifer system and its use for water supply. Two vast aquifer systems, the Surficial Aquifer System (SAS) and the FAS, underlie the Upper East Coast Planning Area. Groundwater inflows from outside the planning area form an insignificant portion of recharge to the SAS. Rainfall is the main source of recharge, and because of this, long-term utilization of this source must be governed by local and regional recharge rates. The FAS, on the other hand, receives most of its recharge from outside of the Upper East Coast Planning Area. This fact must also be incorporated into long-term planning decisions. Within an individual aquifer, hydraulic properties and water quality may vary both vertically and horizontally. Groundwater supply potential varies greatly from one place to another.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - CRITICAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

Ten Mile Creek Water Preserve Area

The project is located just south of Ten Mile Creek in St. Lucie County. Ten Mile Creek is the largest subbasin delivering water to the North Fork of the St. Lucie River Estuary (SLE). The SLE discharges into the IRL, which is the most biologically diverse estuary in North America and has been designated as an Outstanding Florida Water. The entire lagoon is endangered due to increased runoff from watershed drainage fluctuations. Excess storm water from drainage improvements is causing radical fluctuations of the salinity of the SLE resulting in elimination of viable habitat suitable for oysters, seagrasses and marine fish spawning.

The project involves acquisition of approximately 920 acres of land and construction of a water preserve area to attenuate flows and improve water quality discharge to the SLE/IRL. The project features a two-stage detention system consisting of a Water Preserve Area (WPA) and polishing cell. A series of large pumps will deliver water from Ten Mile Creek into the WPA during high water at a rate of 380 cfs. Water will be stored in the 550 acre WPA and then metered out through a 40 cfs spillway into a polishing cell of 134 acres. The deep-water storage cell will allow for storage of up to 5,000 acre-feet. The total estimated project cost is \$29.1 million according to the project cooperation agreement entered into by the SFWMD and the USACE on January 7, 2000. More information is available regarding this critical project at www.saj.usace.army.mil/projects/index.html.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - UPPER EAST COAST

Several ongoing watershed management/planning programs in the Upper East Coast and IRL area are expected to be completed, which would beneficially affect water quality conditions in the St. Lucie River and Estuary, IRL and other freshwater water bodies in the area. The SFWMD IRL SWIM team has developed numerous programs and objectives to improve water quality conditions in the area. Many of the water quality remediation activities being implemented by the SWIM plan focus on reducing agricultural pollutant loads in the IRL Watershed and urban/suburban pollutant loads in the rapidly developing coastal region surrounding the St. Lucie Estuary and IRL. Implementation of more environmentally sensitive Lake Okeechobee regulation schedules should also reduce pollutant loading to the St. Lucie Estuary/IRL systems. The IRL National Estuary Program, jointly administered by the USEPA and the state of Florida will also result in water quality improvement activities and a reduction of pollutant loads to the IRL in the future. In summary, as a result of these ongoing watershed management programs, water quality in the Upper East Coast is expected to improve in the future.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - UPPER EAST COAST

The Upper East Coast Region includes Martin and St. Lucie counties and a small portion of Okeechobee County. The principal water body is the IRL, which includes the St. Lucie River. The Upper East Coast is hydrologically connected to the Everglades and Florida Bay ecosystems through the C-44 (St. Lucie) Canal. The IRL is a SWIM priority water body. Most of the Upper East Coast Watershed consists of Class III waters; however, there are small areas of Class II waters (shellfish propagation or harvesting) within the watershed. Class II waters are generally afforded greater protection than Class III waters. Currently, nine locations in the St. Lucie (C-44) Canal, the North and South forks of the St. Lucie River, and several subbasins draining to the IRL are listed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) on the 1998 303(d) list of impaired water bodies. Pollutants/constituents causing impairment include: low levels of DO, excessive nutrients, high levels of total suspended solids (TSS), high biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), coliform bacteria and mercury (based on fish consumption advisories). There are an additional eight monitoring locations in the southern IRL area also included on the 1998 303(d) list. In addition to the above-listed constituents, copper and turbidity were identified to be causing use impairment at some of the monitoring sites.

On October 1, 2002 the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) submitted the 2002 update to Florida's 303 (d) list of impaired surface waters. The scope of this 2002 list is limited to specific basins, termed Group 1 Basins, representing approximately one fifth of the state. The FDEP plans to submit annual amendments to its 303 (d) list as part of the Watershed Management Approach, which rotates through all of Florida's basins over a five year cycle. The planned annual updates of the 1998 list will provide a transition between the 1998 list and lists developed under the new methodology. Except for the listed Group 1 waters, the 1998 303 (d) list will remain unchanged until the FDEP completes its assessment of waters on the 1998 303 (d) list, and annually adopts, by Secretarial Order, basin specific verified lists for Groups 2 through 5.

The SFWMD portion of the IRL system, South IRL and St. Lucie River, are included in Group 2. Public meetings have been held on the draft verified list of impaired waters for Group 2 and public comment on the Group 2 list was closed on August 1, 2003. Once the verified list of impaired waters has been adopted by FDEP through a Secretarial Order, the list will be submitted to the U.S. EPA as the state's Section 303 (d) list of impaired waters for the basin. The pollutants/constituents contained in the current draft of the verified list for impaired waters in the IRL and St. Lucie River are consistent with the previously adopted 1998 303 (d) list.

Once these impaired waters have been approved by EPA, the FDEP staff will begin developing TMDLs for these waters. A TMDL represents the maximum amount of pollutant loading that can be discharged to a water body and have its designated uses be met. The final step in this process will be the development, by watershed stakeholders and FDEP, of a Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP). The BMAP will specify the activities, schedule, and funding sources that point and nonpoint source dischargers will undertake to restore the water body.

Overall, water quality conditions in the Upper East Coast and the IRL are expected to be somewhat improved by 2050, compared to existing conditions. Lake Okeechobee freshwater discharges via the St. Lucie Canal (C-44) alter ambient salinity levels and deliver nutrients and other

pollutants contained in Lake Okeechobee water and runoff from localized sources (agricultural and urban) to the estuary. The C-23/C-24/C-25 Canal system in St. Lucie County facilitates drainage to sustain agricultural (primarily citrus groves) and urban development in the vicinity of those canals. Implementation of a different regulation schedule for Lake Okeechobee is also expected to improve water quality conditions in the IRL Estuary by reducing the frequency and volume of freshwater delivered to the estuary. It is also expected that agricultural nonpoint source pollution loads delivered to the estuary via secondary and tertiary canals connected to C&SF Project canals will be reduced compared to existing conditions through the implementation of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) and the conversion of some agricultural lands to other uses (e.g., conservation, urban/suburban development). The efforts of the IRL Save Our Rivers (SOR) project and St. Lucie County Mosquito Control have significantly improved water quality in the eastern lagoon through the use of mosquito impoundments.

The extent of urbanization in the watershed is expected to increase by 2050. New growth and development in the watershed will be regulated to comply with water quality regulations governing point and nonpoint source discharges; however, the net pollution load contributed to the St. Lucie River and the IRL system from these sources is expected to increase compared to existing conditions. Ongoing and planned pollutant load reduction activities in the Upper East Coast Region should help offset additional pollutant loads expected to occur from future urbanization.

LAND USE - UPPER EAST COAST

The record of human existence in the Upper East Coast Region spans approximately 8,000 years. The lagoon system provided the Indians and early settlers with food, materials for tools and their major means of transportation. In the late 1800s, the IRL Region was already established as a major area of commerce (tourism, fisheries, shipping and agriculture). The lagoon was used for safe harbor and transportation of cargo, especially citrus.

At present, the dominant land use in the basin is agriculture (covering approximately 45 percent of the basin). Combined agricultural land use in Martin and St. Lucie counties total 346,448 acres. The present urban land use (17 percent of the basin) is concentrated along the coast and the lagoon shorelines. Urban growth is rapidly extending westward, replacing agricultural land. Future land use patterns indicate that this trend will continue as urbanization intensifies along the coast, especially in the southern counties (Swain and Bolohassen, 1987). Present forested uplands and wetlands comprise 11 percent and 18.8 percent of the basin, respectively.

Agriculture - Upper East Coast

Citrus is the dominant agricultural land use in the watershed. There are over 134,000 acres devoted to commercial citrus in St. Lucie and Martin counties. St. Lucie and Martin counties rank first and eighth, respectively, among Florida counties for number of acres of citrus (FASS, 1996b). Although this area is known primarily for its citrus production, many acres are used for pasture land. Farms average 600 acres in size with moderate productivity per acre (UFBEBR, 1995). More than 7,500 people are employed in agricultural production and services with a payroll of approximately \$9.5 million (UFBEBR, 1995). The market value of all agricultural products in this region totals approximately \$362 million (UFBEBR, 1995). Approximately 200,000 acres are irrigated

(UFBEBR, 1995) requiring a dependable water supply. Lake Okeechobee has traditionally been the water source for this region.

ELIGIBLE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN (CERP) PROJECTS

Indian River Lagoon – South (IRL-S)

The Indian River Lagoon - South is the most bio-diverse estuarine system in all of North America. The Final Feasibility Study for the Indian River Lagoon-South project recommends a plan in Martin, St. Lucie, and Okeechobee Counties that will improve water quality within the St. Lucie Estuary (SLE) and the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) by: reducing the damaging effects of watershed runoff; reducing high peak freshwater discharges to control salinity levels; and reducing nutrient loads, pesticides and other pollutants. The project will also provide water supply for agriculture to offset reliance on the Floridan Aquifer.

The plan includes 170,000 acre feet of storage in three types of components including reservoirs (C-44, C-23/24 North and South Reservoirs and C-25 Reservoir), storm water treatment areas (C-44, C-23/C-24, C-25 and C-23/C-44 Canal/STA), and 90,000 acres of natural storage areas (Allapattah, Palmar, and Cypress Creek). The plan also calls for the removal of 5,500,000 cubic yards of muck from the St. Lucie River and Estuary.

C-44 Basin

The recommended plan includes two structural components within the C-44 Basin. These components include the C-44 Reservoir and a large Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) which will treat stormwater from the C44 basin and stormwater that will be diverted from the C23 basin into the C44 basin. The C-44 Basin also includes the Palmar Complex - Natural Storage and Water Quality Treatment Area. It should be noted that the C-44 Canal flows both east to the SLE through S-80 and west to Lake Okeechobee through S-308. All of the features in the C-44 Basin are located within Martin County. Palmar Complex - Natural Storage and Treatment Area, pasture land with degraded wetlands in the C-44 basin, has been identified for use as alternative storage, nutrient removal, re-hydration and habitat restoration. Establishing this land as a natural storage and treatment area is consistent with the CERP ecological enhancement goal by increasing the spatial extent of functional natural areas, improving habitat and functional quality, and improving native plant and animal species abundance and diversity. The size and location of this land will add to the greenway concept by providing "low tech" water storage and water quality improvement in close proximity to other public lands, such as Jonathan Dickenson State Park, Atlantic Ridge, Corbett Wildlife Management Area, Dupuis Reserve and Palmar.

C-23/24 Basin

The recommended plan includes five components within the C-23/24 Basin. These components are the C-23/24 North Reservoir, C-23/24 South Reservoir, C-23/24 Stormwater Treatment Area, Cypress Creek Complex - Natural Storage and Water Quality Treatment Area, and

Allapattah Complex – Natural Storage and Water Quality Treatment Area. An operational feature of the IRL-S Plan known as the northern and southern diversions are accomplished via use of the construction features described for this basin. The Allapattah - Natural Storage and Water Quality Treatment Area is located in Martin County. The balance of the C-23/24 Basin features are located in St. Lucie and Okeechobee Counties.

C-25 and Northfork and Southfork Basins

The recommended plan includes three components within the C-25 Basin and North Fork and South Fork basins of the SLR. These components include the C-25 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area, Muck Remediation, Artificial Habitat, and North Fork Floodplain Restoration.

More detailed information about the Indian River Lagoon - South project is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

OTHER ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Indian River Lagoon (IRL) SWIM Plan

The Florida Legislature enacted the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Act (Chapter 373.451-373.4595, F.S.) in 1987. This Act declares that many natural surface water systems in Florida, including the Indian River Lagoon (IRL), have been or are becoming degraded. Factors contributing to this degradation include point and nonpoint sources of pollution and the destruction of natural habitats. The SWIM Act directed the St. Johns River and South Florida Water Management Districts, with the cooperation of state agencies and local governments, to design and implement a plan for the improvement of surface waters and habitats in the IRL. The Districts complied with this mandate in the development of the 1989 SWIM Plan for the IRL, which was updated in 1994 and 2002. A variety of pollution reduction and habitat restoration programs and projects have been underway since the adoption of the 1989 SWIM Plan.

The Seagrass and Water Quality program largely consists of projects that focus on the relationship between water quality and seagrass productivity and diversity. The fundamental prerequisite to seagrass recovery is the improvement of water quality, allowing more sunlight to penetrate deeper into Lagoon waters. Activities have a diagnostic or feasibility assessment function – assessing the health of the Lagoon’s seagrass resource, defining the impacts to this resource, setting restoration targets or performance measures, and recommending and evaluating strategies to achieve these targets. The recovery and maintenance of healthy seagrass beds is the programs emphasis. Since 1994, additional efforts have been placed on implementing management strategies and evaluating pollutant load reduction efficiencies through retrofit projects (e.g., stormwater treatment basins, muck removal, and sediment traps).

The Coastal Wetlands program is engaged in four major areas: 1) rehabilitation of impacted coastal wetlands, particularly impounded wetlands (a.k.a. mosquito control impoundments) and other isolated wetlands; 2) promotion of ecologically balanced management of reconnected wetlands; 3) preservation of existing, undisturbed wetlands through public acquisition under CARL, the IRL Blueway Project, and other funding sources, or through conservation and preservation

agreements with existing owners; 4) Creation of shoreline vegetative habitats, salt marshes and mangrove swamps.

More detailed information about the Plan is available at http://www.sfwmd.gov/org/wrp/wrp_ce/projects/irl_swim.html

St. Lucie River Issue Team

The IRL watershed, particularly the St. Lucie Estuary (SLE) portion, was drastically impacted by necessary freshwater releases in 1998 due to El Nino rains. Lake Okeechobee was the highest it had ever been during the dry season with the wet season and coinciding hurricane season only a few months away. Water managers decided to take extreme measures to bring down the level of the Lake as quickly as possible to reduce threats to levee integrity.

Freshwater releases of up to 7,500 cubic feet per second, or 15,000-acre feet per day were made to the St. Lucie Estuary for a period of almost 6 weeks. These “maximum discharge” releases resulted in severe ecological impacts to the SLE ecosystem. The community and media brought attention to the catastrophic event and demanded action towards restoring the damaged habitat, and preventing further releases that resulted in habitat and wildlife loss. The St. Lucie River Issue Team was formed by the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force to document the existing condition of the SLE, describe the impacts of the discharge event, and develop an interim action plan with specific short term projects that could be implemented within five years to improve water quality in the SLE. The team was made up of a variety of federal, state and local governments in addition to agricultural and environmental interests.

In the past five years the St. Lucie Issues Team has solicited, ranked and submitted to the Florida Legislature local turn-dirt projects focused on the restoration of the St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River Lagoon. We have received \$26.5 million in the past four years from the Florida Legislature and \$2 million from the South Florida Water Management District. Each project funded requires a minimum of a 50% match from the local sponsor and projects are ranked according to three basic criteria: benefits derived from funds, readiness and local commitment. To date the Issues Team has funded more than 87 projects in Martin and St. Lucie counties and their municipalities.

The SLRIT projects include local stormwater retrofits, habitat restoration projects and research; all aimed at improving the quantity, timing, distribution and quality of water entering the SLE and IRL-S. Habitat restoration projects aim to increase the spatial extent and functionality of habitat for local estuarine flora and fauna, including rare, threatened and endangered species. FY 2005 Grant Applications have been received to fund the following projects:

- Correlation Among Rainfall Events, Nutrients, and Phytoplankton Composition in Ten Mile Creek and the St. Lucie River Estuary
- Hibiscus Park Stormwater Management Improvements
- Rio St. Lucie Water Quality Retrofit, Sylvia Street Outfall – Lake Storage Enhancements
- Phytoremediation to Remove Nitrogen and Phosphorus from Stormwaters in Detention Water Systems

- Soil Amendment to Reduce Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Heavy Metals (including Copper) in Surface Runoff from Citrus Groves in the Indian River Area.
- Taylor Creek Streambank Erosion & Sedimentation Project
- Floridan Aquifer Well Decommissioning
- Richey Property Conservation Easement
- Sand Scrub Conservation Easement
- Identification and Quantification of Selected Pesticides entering the St. Lucie Estuary
- Watershed “A” Water Quality Retrofit
- Watershed “B” Water Quality Retrofit
- Ten Mile Creek Natural Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Project
- Simple Stormwater Prevention Solutions Educational Project
- Water Quality Enhancements
- Water Quality Enhancement BMPs
- Harmony Heights Storm Water Improvements – Phase 1
- Paradise Park Storm Water Improvements
- St. Lucie Estuary Tributary Monitoring

Chapter 7

EVERGLADES AGRICULTURAL AREA

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS - EVERGLADES AGRICULTURAL AREA (EAA)

The lands located immediately south and southeast of the Lake Okeechobee in the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District) are known as the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) (**Figure 9**). This area of about 700,000 acres consists of rich, fertile agricultural land. A large portion of the EAA is devoted to the production of sugarcane. The average ground elevation is about 12 feet. The occurrence of surface water in the area is now a direct result of the construction of the numerous conveyance and drainage canals. The primary canals consist of the Miami, the North New River, the Hillsboro and the West Palm Beach canals, which traverse the area north to south, and the Bolles and Cross canals, which extend east to west. Water levels and flows are stringently manipulated in the canals to achieve optimum crop growth.

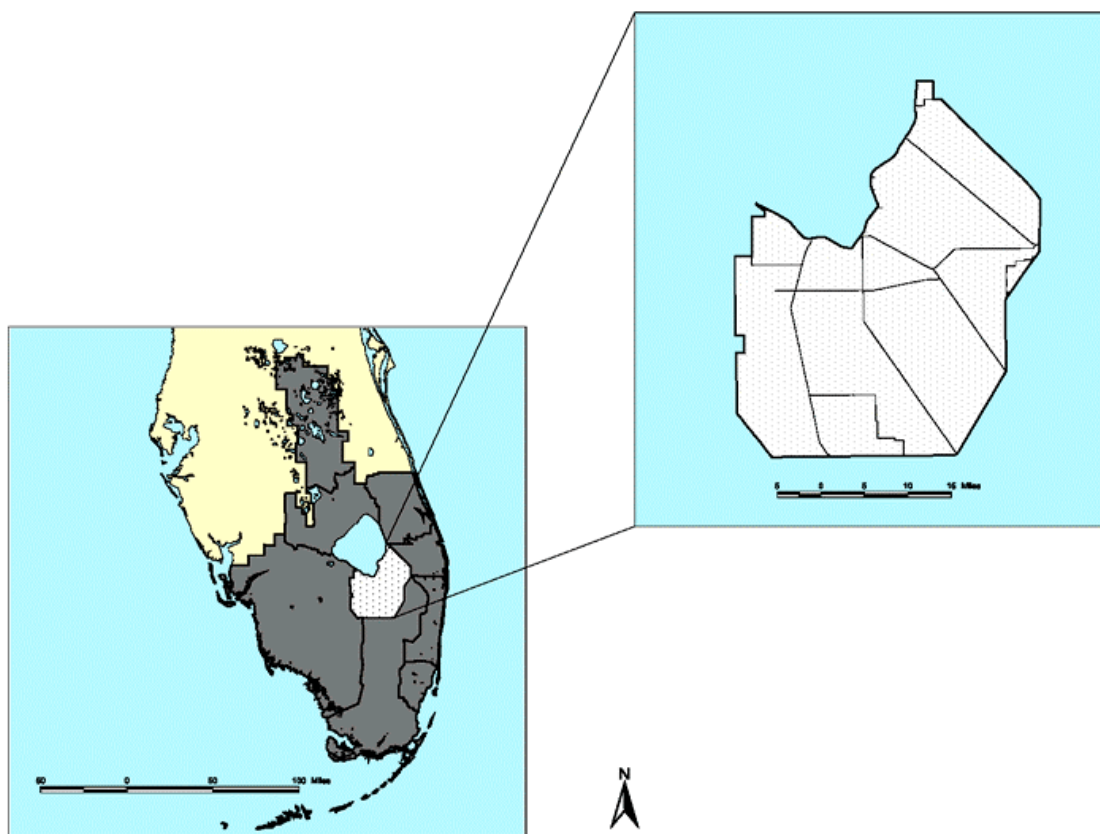


Figure 9. Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA).

EXISTING CONDITIONS - EVERGLADES AGRICULTURAL AREA (EAA) WATER MANAGEMENT

The existing drainage/irrigation system within the EAA is a complicated network of canals, levees, control structures and pumps. The original six major canals, (West Palm Beach, Hillsboro, Miami, North New River, Cross and Bolles canals), built in the 1920s, still serve to drain the EAA although each canal underwent major improvements during the 1960s. Historically the EAA has depended upon the flood storage capacity of Lake Okeechobee to the north and the Everglades Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) to the south as a means of removing excess drainage water from the EAA. Prior to adoption of the Interim Action Plan (IAP) in 1979, the northern one-third of the EAA was routinely backpumped directly into Lake Okeechobee through the S-2, S-3 and S-4 pump stations located on the south shore of the lake. The eastern and southern two-thirds of the EAA drained water south to the WCAs via pump stations S-5A, S-6, S-7 and S-8.

Under the current IAP, drainage from the S-2 and S-3 basins is now also routed south to the WCAs. Approximately 82 percent of the EAA land area (i.e., S-2, S-3, S-5A, S-6, S-7 and S-8 basins) now pump excess drainage waters into the STAs and three WCAs via pump stations S-5A, S-6, S-7 and S-8. Five Chapter 298 Drainage Districts also currently discharge surface water runoff into Lake Okeechobee. As a result, the EAA depends on the flood storage capacity of the STAs and WCAs, and to a lesser extent, on Lake Okeechobee, as a means to remove water from the basin.

The growers remove runoff water from their lands by pumping to the six Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project (C&SF Project) canals serving the EAA. Growers in general are allowed a maximum removal rate that is determined by a runoff formula and is almost always in excess of the basinwide design rate of three-quarters of an inch of runoff per day (Cooper, 1989). This amount was based on the following three considerations:

1. Not all land in the basin would be in agricultural production at one time.
2. Some of the land would be planted with water tolerant crops.
3. The canals in the basin have some storage capacity.

Although the capacity of the canal system is not large enough to handle all the water discharged from the EAA at one time, it was assumed that not all of the growers' pump stations would be pumping or pumping to capacity at any given time (Cooper, 1989).

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - EVERGLADES AGRICULTURAL AREA (EAA)

Recent monitoring results indicate that phosphorus loads in EAA runoff have declined approximately 57 percent (three year average, as reported in the draft 2004 ECR, SFWMD). The current 3-yr average concentration of total phosphorus contained in EAA runoff is approximately 69 parts per billion (as reported in the draft 2004 ECR). Construction of the Everglades Construction Project (ECP) involves converting approximately 44,000 acres of existing agricultural land and

lands of other prior uses into stormwater treatment areas (STAs). The construction project is explained in more detail below.

Everglades Forever Act (EFA)

The 1994 Everglades Forever Act's principal water quality treatment strategy for improving water quality in the Everglades Protection Area centers around five requirements: the ECP, EAA Best Management Practices (BMP) Regulatory Program, Everglades research and monitoring program, evaluation of water quality standards and long-term water quality improvement strategies as part of State compliance permits.

The ECP consists of six large constructed wetland treatment facilities, or STAs, containing approximately 44,000 acres of land previously used for agricultural purposes and other purposes. These areas are designed to treat runoff from the EAA and other sources prior to discharge into the Everglades Protection Area.

The ECP was designed to treat runoff from the EAA and other sources to meet an interim phosphorus concentration target of 50 parts per billion in discharges to the Everglades Protection Area (Burns and McDonnell, 1994). STA-1 West discharges into the L-7 borrow canal in the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (WCA-1). STA-1 East, currently under construction by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will discharge into the L-40 borrow canal in the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (WCA-1). STA-2 discharges to WCA-2A via the L-6 Borrow Canal. STA-3/4 will use the existing S-7 and S-8 pump stations as the outflow facilities. STA-5 discharges to the Miami Canal via the STA-5 discharge canal, where the majority of the water moves south to the northwest corner of WCA-3A. STA-5 discharges are delivered to the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area via a 240-cfs electric pump station (G-410) according to the operating schedule developed by an interagency group recognized in the FDEP permit for STA-5. STA-6 discharges to WCA-3A through the L-4 Borrow Canal. The future base condition assumes all of the treatment areas are completed and operational with the exception of STA-6 Section 2. STA-6 Section 2 was not included in hydrologic regional modeling for the Restudy since the conceptual design for the STA did not include this element (Burns and McDonnell, 1994). STA-6 Section 2 is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2006.

Another component of the ECP targeted for completion in 2004 is the diversion of runoff from five special districts (four Chapter 298 districts and the 715 Farms Area established under Florida Statutes). These special districts are located adjacent to Lake Okeechobee north of the EAA. Currently, the districts discharge directly to Lake Okeechobee. According to the EFA, approximately 80 percent of the historic flow volumes and total phosphorus loads are to be diverted away from the lake. The future base condition assumes that the diversion of flows and loads has been completed.

According to the EFA, based upon research, field-tests and expert review, the EAA BMPs are determined to be the most effective and practicable on-farm means of improving water quality to a level that balances water quality improvements and agricultural productivity. The act establishes monitoring programs, permit requirements, research, field-testing and evaluation programs designed to improve water quality prior to discharge into conveyance canals in the EAA. The act provides a

tax incentive for phosphorus load reductions of 25 percent or more. As a consequence, the future base condition assumes a 25 percent phosphorus load reduction due to BMPs.

In addition to the ECP and BMPs, the EFA directed that an Everglades Research and Modeling program be established to seek means of optimizing the design and operation of the STAs. This program was required to include research to reduce outflow concentrations and identify other treatment and management methods and regulatory programs that are superior to STAs in achieving the intent and purposes of the EFA. The research and monitoring program was also directed toward development of a phosphorus criterion in the Everglades Protection Area by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and evaluation of existing state water quality standards applicable to the Everglades area. In 2003, the state of Florida's Environmental Regulation Commission (ERC) adopted a water quality standard for phosphorus within the EPA that includes a numeric criterion for TP in the EPA, moderating provisions for permits authorizing discharges to the EPA, and a method for determining achievement of the criterion. Research to determine means of optimizing the performance of the STAs is ongoing.

The EFA establishes a long-term water quality goal for water delivered to the EPA to achieve state water quality standards by December 31, 2006. It further requires the following (reference s. 373.4592, F.S.)

(10) LONG-TERM COMPLIANCE PERMITS. By December 31, 2006, the department and the district shall take such action as may be necessary to implement the pre-2006 projects and strategies of the Long-Term Plan so that water delivered to the Everglades Protection Area achieves in all parts of the Everglades Protection Area state water quality standards, including the phosphorus criterion and moderating provisions.

(a) By December 31, 2003, the district shall submit to the department an application for permit modification to incorporate proposed changes to the Everglades Construction Project and other district works delivering water to the Everglades Protection Area as needed to implement the pre-2006 projects and strategies of the Long-Term Plan in all permits issued by the department, including the permits issued pursuant to subsection (9). These changes shall be designed to achieve state water quality standards, including the phosphorus criterion and moderating provisions. During the implementation of the initial phase of the Long-Term Plan, permits issued by the department shall be based on BAPRT, and shall include technology-based effluent limitations consistent with the Long-Term Plan, as provided in subparagraph (4)(e)3.

(b) If the Everglades Construction Project or other discharges to the Everglades Protection Area are in compliance with state water quality standards, including the phosphorus criterion, the permit application shall include:

1. A plan for maintaining compliance with the phosphorus criterion in the Everglades Protection Area.
2. A plan for maintaining compliance in the Everglades Protection Area with state water quality standards other than the phosphorus criterion.

In view of the fact that the phosphorus criterion had not been established, the future base condition assumed that the default standard of 10 parts per billion had been attained.

Design of the ECP was initiated in 1994 and construction began in 1997. STA-6 Section 1 was completed in October 1997 and flow-through operation was initiated in December 1997. Construction of STA-1 West included a 2,900-acre expansion of the existing Everglades Nutrient Removal Project, and start-up operation of the new area began in March 1999. Start-up operation of Stormwater Treatment Area 2 began in June of 1999. STA-5 construction was completed in December of 1998. Completion of STA-1 East is expected to be done by June of 2004 and STA 3/4 is scheduled for completion by June 2004, although start-up operations are scheduled to begin in October 2003.

The Everglades Nutrient Removal Project (ENRP), a demonstration-scale wetlands treatment area project of nearly 3,800 acres began operating adjacent to WCA-1 (Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge) in 1994. The ENRP was designed to reduce phosphorus from an average inflow concentration of 190 parts per billion to an outflow concentration of 50 parts per billion. The settling rate constant for the demonstration project was estimated to be 10.2 meters per year. These were the same parameters established for the ECP STA design. Several years of cumulative data from STA-1W which now encompasses the old ENRP, reflects that these criteria have been significantly exceeded. Additionally, on-farm BMPs have averaged 57 percent over the last three years, considerably higher than the projected 25 percent contained in the future base condition for the EAA.

During the alternative development and evaluation phase of the Restudy, a preliminary study was conducted by Walker (Walker, 1998) to evaluate the performance of the STAs based upon Restudy generated flows from the South Florida Water Management model in the future base condition and the preferred alternative. A phosphorus removal model developed by Walker was used in the study. Modeling results indicated that some of the STAs did not meet the interim phosphorus criteria of the EFA under either the future base condition or the preferred alternative. A closer examination reveals some of the reasons for the apparent underachievement. First, the periods of records differ. The ECP used a 10-year historic period of record from 1979 to 1988 as the basis of design for the sizing of the STAs. The Restudy used a 31-year simulated period from 1965 to 1995 as the basis of the alternatives analysis. Second, the operational concepts differ. The Restudy uses rain-driven operational procedures whereas the ECP uses the current calendar-based regulation schedule. Third, because STA-6 Section 2 was not modeled in the Restudy, the treatment area was not considered in the phosphorus modeling. Therefore, a treatment area totaling nearly 1,400 acres was not considered and the inflows scheduled for this area were all routed through STA-5. Finally, although different periods of record were used for the two studies, the assumed parameters of the settling rate of 10.2 meters per year and targeted outflow concentration of 50 parts per billion remained unchanged from the ECP.

These two parameters (settling rate constant and outflow phosphorus concentration target) are two of the most significant factors in determining the required area of treatment cells. Walker's study did indicate that when the 51 percent BMP phosphorus reduction rate experienced over a three-year period was used in lieu of the 25 percent estimate, all STAs met or bettered the interim phosphorus criterion with the exception of STA-5. STA-5 did not meet the criteria in the modeling outcome due to the third reason cited in the preceding paragraph.

At first blush, the reasons cited above appear to mitigate the Walker model results that some of the STAs did not achieve the interim target when receiving the flows and loads resulting from the implementation of the Restudy projects. Although only time and continued operation of the treatment areas will provide proof, the findings should, in any case, direct research efforts toward ensuring that advanced treatment technologies are sufficient to meet the adopted phosphorus standard. Regardless of the Walker study or the demonstration project findings, the fact remains that the phosphorus standard must be met by 2006. The default criterion of 10 parts per billion is the target assumed in the 2050 future base condition. At that point, the interim standard becomes obsolete. When research efforts determine the optimal method of operation and supplemental technologies needed to meet the phosphorus standard, both the ECP and treatment elements of the Restudy components must be modified to attain the designated water quality standard.

As an important step toward development of the Long-Term Compliance Permit application required under the EFA, the District conducted Basin-Specific Feasibility Studies, which integrated information from research, regulation, and planning in order to meet the final water quality objectives for the EPA. The Basin-Specific Feasibility Studies identified and evaluated alternative solutions for seven basins included in the ECP and for six basins covered by the Everglades Stormwater Program (ESP).

The Basin-Specific Feasibility Studies were conducted according to the following steps:

1. Develop baseline flow and phosphorus data sets
2. Develop a methodology to evaluate alternative water quality measures, based on the factors established in the 1994 Everglades Forever Act and on other appropriate considerations
3. Develop basin-specific alternative combinations of water quality solutions (e.g., source control, STA optimization, and Advanced Treatment Technologies)
4. Evaluate alternative solutions developed in step 3 using the evaluation methodology developed in step 2

The results of the Basin-Specific Feasibility Studies are documented in the October 2002 *Evaluation of Alternatives for the ECP Basins*, prepared for the South Florida Water Management District by Burns & McDonnell, and in the October 2002 *Basin-Specific Feasibility Studies, Everglades Stormwater Program Basins*, prepared for the District by Brown & Caldwell.

Technical representatives from the District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Everglades Agricultural Area Environmental Protection District, and other stakeholders used the results of the Basin-Specific Feasibility Studies to formulate a consensus approach for achieving the long-term water quality goals of the Everglades Forever Act. Their recommended approach, referred to as the Long-Term Plan, is set forth in the *Conceptual Plan for Achieving Long-Term Water Quality Goals* (Burns & McDonnell, 2003).

During the 2003 legislative session, the 1994 EFA was amended to include reference to the Long-Term Plan as the appropriate strategy for achieving the long-term water quality goals for the EPA. The amended EFA includes the following direction:

- Implementation of the Long-Term Plan shall be integrated and consistent with the implementation of the projects and activities in the congressionally authorized components of the CERP so that unnecessary and duplicative costs will be avoided.
- Nothing regarding integration of Long-Term Plan components with CERP projects shall modify any existing cost share or responsibility provided for projects included in the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 or in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000.

The majority of Everglades tributary basins contain proposed CERP projects. There is potential for significant cost savings by integrating some of the Long-Term Plan components with the CERP projects. Many of the CERP projects are currently in the early planning and design phases, therefore uncertainty exists in how CERP projects would influence flows and water quality, as well as their implementation schedules. Close coordination is needed between members of the CERP project delivery teams and staff implementing the Long-Term Plan components to ensure that project goals are met on schedule.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - EVERGLADES AGRICULTURAL AREA (EAA)

According to the FDEP 1998 303(d) list of use-impaired water bodies, there are approximately 10 canal segments within the EAA not meeting designated uses for Class III waters. For the most part, these include canal segments affected by operation of the primary pump stations and canals discharging water from the EAA to downstream areas (e.g., S-7 and S-8 pump stations; North New River, Hillsboro and West Palm Beach canals). In addition to excessive nutrient loads, low dissolved oxygen (DO) levels and high levels of mercury (based on fish consumption advisories), coliform bacteria, total suspended solids (TSS), turbidity and unionized ammonia contributed to use impairment in Class III waters within the EAA. It should be noted that within the EAA, there are many agricultural canals or ditches in agricultural water management systems controlled by water control structures permitted by the SFWMD. Such water bodies are classified as Class IV waters (agricultural water supply) pursuant to Rule 62-302.600(3)(a), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). Generally, the water quality criteria for Class IV waters are less stringent than those for Class III waters. None of the 303(d)-listed segments within the EAA are in Class IV waters.

Water quality conditions within the EAA are expected to improve in 2050 compared to existing conditions. It is important to note that the existing conditions for the EAA demonstrate significant water quality improvements compared with recent past conditions. Recent water quality improvements in the area have occurred as a result of the implementation of the EAA regulatory program (F.A.C. Rule 40E-63) beginning in 1993 and the operation of the STAs. The regulatory program requires BMPs and monitoring to achieve a 25 percent reduction in phosphorus loading from the EAA to the Everglades Protection Area. Recent monitoring results indicate that phosphorus loads in area runoff have declined approximately 57 percent (SFWMD, 2004) due to the BMPs. The current 3-yr average concentration of total phosphorus contained in EAA runoff is approximately 69

parts per billion (SFWMD, 2004). Over 1,400 metric tons of phosphorus have been removed by the EAA BMPs and STAs that otherwise would have entered the Everglades. BMPs are also expected to have resulted in a net reduction of other pollutants contained in agricultural runoff, although the extent of load reduction for other pollutants has not been fully quantified since the implementation of the program; nor is it a specific objective of that program.

LAND USE - EVERGLADES AGRICULTURAL AREA (EAA)

Agriculture

The EAA contains all or parts of Palm Beach and Hendry counties. Most of Hendry County lies within the Big Cypress Region, so it was discussed in that section of the report. More than 600,000 acres are farmed in Palm Beach County (UFBEBR, 1995), and sugarcane was harvested from about half of that acreage in 1996 (FASS, 1996d). Sugarcane receipts accounted for 68 percent of total field crop sales in Florida in 1996 (FASS, 1996c). The EAA is known for its sugarcane production and sugar processing, but Palm Beach County also ranks fifteen among Florida counties for acres of citrus (FASS, 1996b). This region is characterized by midsize farms averaging 690 acres each with high productivity of more than \$1,300 per acre (UFBEBR, 1995). More than 18,000 people are employed in agricultural production and services representing a payroll of more than \$26 million (UFBEBR, 1995). Total market value of agricultural products in Palm Beach County is almost \$900 million, ranking it first among counties in the state of Florida (UFBEBR, 1995) and third among United States counties (FDACS, 1994).

The EAA is highly dependent upon the system of canals running through the region to provide necessary drainage of excess water during the wet season, as well as supplemental water supplies for irrigation during the dry season. Approximately two thirds of the land farmed in the EAA is irrigated, totaling more than 580,000 acres (B. Boyd, pers. comm.). The EAA has traditionally relied upon Lake Okeechobee for its water supply, and looked to the WCAs to the south to receive their excess drainage.

Continued agricultural production in the EAA has become increasingly controversial. Some of the factors that may affect EAA agriculture include water quality concerns, soil subsidence and encroachment of urbanization. The water quality concerns, particularly phosphorus loading, are being addressed through implementation of BMPs, construction of STAs, the growing use of organic farming practices and rice cultivation in rotation with sugarcane production.

Palm Beach County is included in this region. A portion of Hendry County also lies in the EAA. Palm Beach County is not entirely within the EAA, but it is assumed that the majority of agricultural production is within the EAA because the remaining portion of the county is primarily urbanized.

Although sugarcane cultivation in the EAA has come under some sharp criticism in recent years, sugarcane is recognized as the most appropriate crop for this region. Sugarcane requires less phosphorus fertilizer than other crops grown in the EAA (Sanchez, 1990), and sugarcane has been found to remove 1.79 times more phosphorus than was applied as fertilizer (Coale et al., 1993). Florida sugarcane only requires small amounts of pesticides due to disease resistant and tolerant

cultivars, and cultivation instead of herbicides for weed control. Sugarcane also tolerates greater variability in water table levels, allowing for more flexible water management strategies (Glaz, 1995).

Soil subsidence has become a potential threat to long-term crop production in the EAA. The average historic rate of subsidence of 1 inch per year has slowed to 0.56 inches per year since 1978 (Shih et al., 1997). They attributed the lower rate to several factors including higher water tables and an increased proportion of land planted to sugarcane. Surveys conducted by Shih et al. (1997) in 1997 found an average of 1.62 feet to 4.36 feet of soil remaining over 11 transects. Prevention of continued soil subsidence will depend on maintaining high groundwater levels to prevent further oxidation of the soil profile. This, in turn, will require development of more water-tolerant sugarcane varieties and/or increased rice cultivation. This research is currently underway and showing promising results (Glaz, 1997). A strong agricultural economy in the EAA based on profitable crop production is the best defense against conversion of agricultural land to urban land.

Rotenberger and Holey Land Wildlife Management Areas

The Holey Land Tract (35,026 acres) is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) as a state wildlife management area. The SFWMD has been managing the hydroperiod since completion of a perimeter levee and pump station in 1990. The Rotenberger Tract (23,970 acres) is also managed by the FWC as state wildlife management area. The Brown's Farm Tract (4,460 acres) was incorporated into STA-2 and is therefore no longer managed as a state wildlife management area. Lake Harbor Waterfowl Management Area is operated by FWC for management of waterfowl. The land is under rice production for both harvest and wildlife habitat.

Urban

The remaining five percent of the EAA includes the communities of Pahokee, Belle Glade, South Bay and Clewiston, along with several sugar mills, roads, canals and water control features.

C-139 Basin

Land use within the C-139 Basin of eastern Hendry County is predominantly agricultural. The land use in the basin is approximately 62 percent agricultural, 4 percent urban and 34 percent native land cover. This rural area is primarily pasture land for cattle grazing, with increasing amounts of land being converted to citrus groves. Agricultural land uses include vegetable farms, citrus groves, improved pasture and unimproved pasture (Mock Roos, 1993).

ELIGIBLE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN (CERP) PROJECTS

Everglades Agricultural Storage Reservoir Project - Part 1

This project is the first part of the of the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir component. It includes two aboveground reservoirs with a total storage capacity of approximately 240,000 acre-feet located on land associated with the Talisman Land purchase in the EAA. Conveyance capacity increases for the Miami, North New River, Bolles and Cross Canals are also included in the design of this project. This project will improve timing of environmental deliveries to the WCAs by reducing damaging flood releases from the EAA to the WCAs, reducing Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases to estuaries, meeting supplemental agricultural irrigation demands and increasing flood protection within the EAA. More detailed information is available on www.evergladesplan.org/.

Everglades Agricultural Storage Reservoir Project - Part 2

This project is the second part of the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir component. It includes an above-ground reservoir with a total storage capacity of approximately 120,000 acre-feet located in the Everglades Agricultural Area in western Palm Beach County. The initial design for the reservoir assumed 20,000 acres, which would make-up the third compartment of storage in the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir, with water levels fluctuating up to six feet above grade. The need for this compartment will be determined through more detailed planning and design after Phase 1 is completed.

The purpose of this project is to further improve the timing of environmental deliveries to the Water Conservation Areas, including reducing damaging flood releases from the Everglades Agricultural Area to the Water Conservation Areas and reducing Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases to the estuaries. This last increment of storage would be used to meet environmental demands as a priority. The sources of water for this reservoir are overflow from the Phase 1 reservoirs and Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases only during extreme wet events. This project will be operated as a dry storage reservoir and discharges made down to 18 inches below ground level. The project can also be designed to provide a water quality treatment function, augmenting the performance of the Everglades Construction Project and ensuring protection of water quality in the Everglades Protection Area. Design of this project for water quality performance will be based on water quality targets for the Everglades Construction Project and other water quality targets developed to protect designated uses in Everglades Agricultural Area waters. More detailed information is available on www.evergladesplan.org/.

Chapter 8

EVERGLADES, FLORIDA BAY AND KEYS REGIONS

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS - EVERGLADES, FLORIDA BAY AND KEYS REGIONS

The Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) are an integral component of the Everglades and freshwater supplies for South Florida (**Figure 10**). The WCAs, located south and east of the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), comprise an area of about 1,350 square miles, including 1,337 square miles of the original Everglades, which averaged some 40 miles in width and extended approximately 100 miles southward from Lake Okeechobee to the sea.

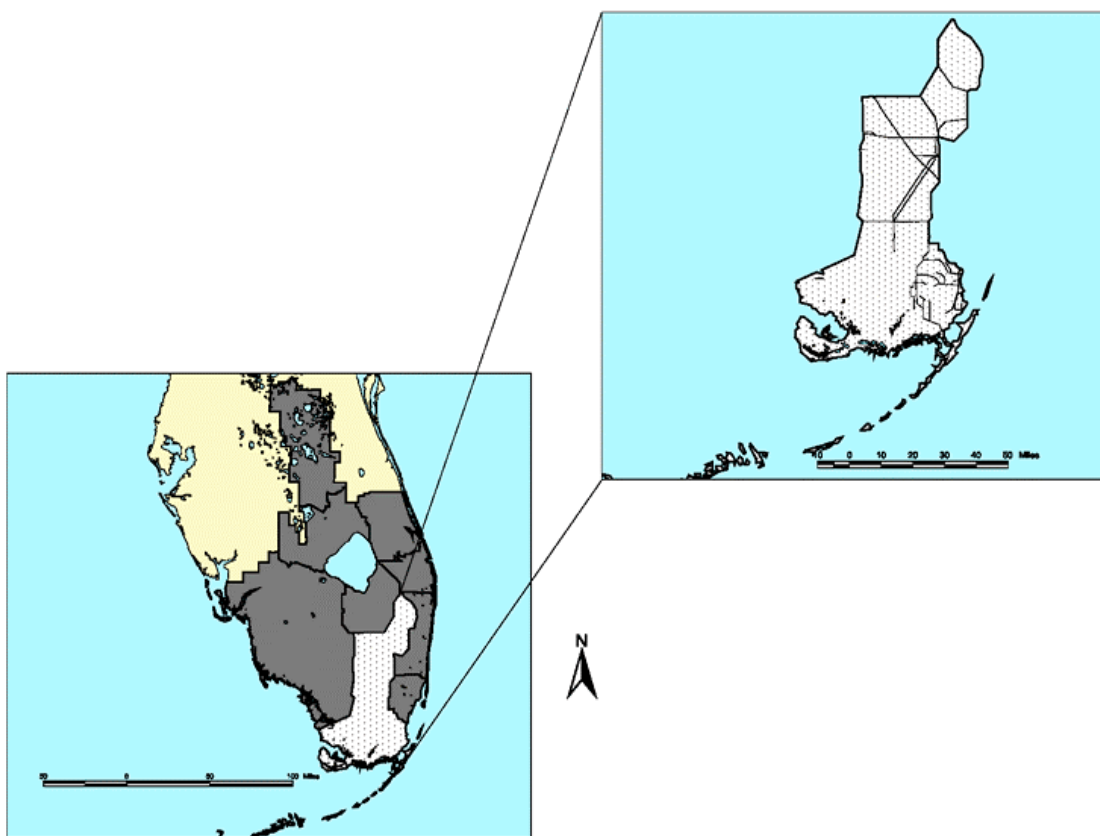


Figure 10. Everglades, Florida Bay and Keys Regions.

The WCAs provide a detention reservoir for excess water from the agricultural area and parts of the Lower East Coast Region, and for flood discharge from Lake Okeechobee. The WCAs also provide levees needed to prevent Everglades floodwaters from inundating the Lower East Coast, while providing water supply for Lower East Coast agricultural lands and Everglades National Park (ENP); improving water supply for east coast communities by recharging the Biscayne Aquifer (the

sole source of drinking water for southern Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties); retarding saltwater intrusion in coastal wellfields; and benefiting fish and wildlife in the Everglades.

WCA-1 is designated as the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). WCA-2 and WCA-3 are public hunting and fishing areas comprising the Everglades Wildlife Management Area maintained by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), formerly the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (FGFWFC). The Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes each have reserved rights within WCA-3.

Florida Bay and the Ten Thousand Islands comprise 1,500 square miles of ENP. The bay is shallow, with an average depth of less than three feet. To the north is the Florida mainland and to the south lie the Florida Keys. Sheetflow across marl prairies of the southern Everglades and 20 creek systems fed by Taylor Slough and the C-111 Canal provide direct inflow of fresh surface water and groundwater recharge. Surface water from Shark River Slough, the subregion's largest drainage feature, flows into Whitewater Bay and also may provide essential groundwater recharge for central and western Florida Bay. Exchange with Florida Bay occurs as this lower salinity water mass flows around Cape Sable into the western subregion of the bay.

The Florida Keys are a limestone island archipelago extending southwest over 200 miles from the southern tip of the Florida mainland to the Dry Tortugas, 63 miles west of Key West. The Keys are bounded on the north and west by the relatively shallow waters of Biscayne Bay, Barnes and Blackwater sounds, Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. Hawk Channel lies to the south, between the mainland Keys and an extensive reef tract 5 miles offshore. The Straits of Florida lie beyond the reef, separating the Keys from Cuba and the Bahamas.

The Florida Keys are made up of over 1,700 islands encompassing approximately 103 square miles. They are broad, with little relief, have a shoreline length of 1,865 miles, and are inhabited from Soldier Key to Key West. Key Largo and Big Pine Key are the largest islands. The Keys are frequently divided into the following three regions:

1. the Upper Keys (north of Upper Matecumbe Key)
2. the Middle Keys (from Upper Matecumbe Key to the Seven Mile Bridge)
3. the Lower Keys (from Little Duck Key to Key West)

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary encompasses approximately 3,668 square miles of submerged lands and waters between the southern tip of Key Biscayne and the Dry Tortugas Bank. North of Key Largo the sanctuary includes Barnes and Card sounds, and to the east and south the oceanic boundary is the 300-foot isobath. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary also contains part of Florida Bay and the entire Florida Reef Tract, the largest reef system in the continental United States. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary contains components of five distinct physiographic regions: Florida Bay, the Southwest Continental Shelf, the Florida Reef Tract, the Florida Keys and the Straits of Florida. The regions are environmentally and lithologically unique, and together they form the framework for the sanctuary's diverse terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

Water Conservation Area 1 (WCA-1)

WCA-1 (Loxahatchee NWR) is about 21 miles long from north to south and comprises an area of 221 square miles. The West Palm Beach Canal lies at the extreme northern boundary, and on the south the Hillsboro Canal separates WCA-1 from WCA-2. Ground elevations slope about 5 feet in 10 miles, both to the north and to the south from the west center of the area, varying from over 16 feet in the northwest to less than 12 feet in the south. The area, which is enclosed by about 58 miles of levee (approximately 13 miles of which are common to WCA-2), provides storage for excess rainfall, excess runoff from agricultural drainage areas of the West Palm Beach Canal (230 square miles) and the Hillsboro Canal (146 square miles), and excess water from Lake Okeechobee. Inflow comes from rainfall and runoff from the EAA through canals at the northern end. Release of water for dry-season use is controlled by structures in the West Palm Beach Canal, the Hillsboro Canal, and in the north-south levee, which forms the eastern boundary of the area. When stages exceed the regulation schedule, excess water in WCA-1 is discharged to WCA-2.

Water Conservation Area 2 (WCA-2)

WCA-2 is comprised of two areas, 2A and 2B, measures about 25 miles from north to south, and covers an area of 210 square miles. It is separated from the other WCAs by the Hillsboro Canal on the north, and the North New River Canal on the south. Ground elevations slope southward about 2 to 3 feet in 10 miles, ranging from over 13 feet NGVD (National Geodetic Vertical Datum) in the northwest to less than 7 feet NGVD in the south. The area is enclosed by about 61 miles of levee, of which approximately 13 miles are common to WCA-1 and 15 miles to WCA-3. An interior levee across the southern portion of the area reduces water losses due to seepage into an extremely pervious aquifer at the southern end of the pool and prevents overtopping of the southern exterior levee by hurricane waves.

The upper pool, WCA-2A, provides a 173 square mile reservoir for storage of excess water from WCA-1 and a 125 square mile agricultural drainage area of the North New River Canal. Storage in WCA-2A provides water supply to the east coast urban areas of Broward County. Water enters the area from WCA-1 and the Hillsboro Canal on the northeast side, and from the North New River Canal on the northwest side. Water in excess of that required for efficient operation of WCA-2A is discharged to WCA-3 via structures into C-14, the North New River Canal and WCA-2B.

WCA-2B has ground elevations ranging from 9.5 feet NGVD in the northern portions down to 7.0 feet NGVD in the southern portions of the area. The area experiences a high seepage rate, which does not allow for long-term storage of water, and as a result, water is not normally released from the area.

Water Conservation Area 3 (WCA-3)

WCA-3 is also divided into two parts, 3A and 3B. It is about 40 miles long from north to south and comprises about 915 square miles, making it the largest of the conservation areas. Ground elevations, which slope southeasterly 1 to 3 feet in 10 miles, range from over 13 feet NGVD in the northwest to 6 feet NGVD in the southeast. The Miami Canal traverses the area from northwest to southeast, and the North New River Canal separates it from WCA-2. The area is enclosed by about

111 miles of levee, of which 15 miles are common to WCA-2. An interior levee system across the southeastern corner of the area reduces seepage into an extremely pervious aquifer.

The upper pool, WCA-3A, provides a 752 square mile area for storage of excess water from WCA-2A; rainfall excess from approximately 750 square miles in Collier and Hendry counties and from 71 square miles of the former Davie agricultural area lying east of Pumping Station S-9 in Broward County; and excess water from a 208 square mile agricultural drainage area of the Miami Canal and other adjacent areas to the north. Water enters WCA-3A from various sources on the northern and eastern sides. The storage is used to meet the principal water supply needs of adjacent areas, including urban water supply and salinity control requirements for Miami-Dade and Monroe County, irrigation requirements and water supply for ENP.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - WATER CONSERVATION AREAS (WCAS) WATER MANAGEMENT

Surrounded by 56 miles of levees and canals, WCA-1 is the only conservation area completely encircled by canals. A network of pump stations, levees and water control structures, controls water levels. The water management facilities are hydrologically connected with Lake Okeechobee, the EAA, WCA-2, WCA-3 and the Atlantic Ocean. Rainfall represents the major source of water inflow into WCA-1, accounting for about 54 percent of the refuge's water budget. Pump Station S-5A, located at the northern tip of the refuge near 20-Mile Bend, moves water into the refuge from the West Palm Beach Canal, accounting for approximately 30 percent of the inflow water. Pump Station S-6, located on the refuge's western border, pumps water from the Hillsboro Canal into the southwest portion of the refuge, accounting for about 15 percent of WCA-1 inflow water. Approximately 45 percent of the WCA-1 water inflow originates as drainage from agricultural land located north and west of WCA-1.

Two small pumps operated by the Acme Improvement District are located in the L-40 Levee on the northeastern boundary of the refuge. These pumps drain primarily residential/urban lands (Wellington) and can move water in and out of the refuge. Acme represents only a minor fraction (<1 percent) of the refuge's water budget. Four water control structures (S-10A, S-10C, S-10D and S-10E) exist along WCA-1 on the southern levee of L-39 (Hillsboro Canal). The S-10 structures allow water to flow southward out of the Hillsboro Canal and WCA-1 into WCA-2A if so desired. The Hillsboro Canal (L-39), located in the extreme southeast corner of the refuge, drains WCA-1 to the east through S-39, which provides water supply to urban areas and discharges drainage waters to tide water. To the north, the S-5A Structure can be used to move water north out of the refuge into the L-8 Canal. There are four other small privately operated structures in the L-40 levees; one of these is operated by the USFWS. These structures constitute less than one percent of the refuge's annual water budget. Water management operations for WCA-1 are governed by a water regulation schedule adopted in 1994.

Major developments in the WCAs have been the construction of canals, levees, water control structures and roads. WCAs-2 and 3 are almost completely enclosed by a levee and canal system that is approximately 150 miles in length. The only portion of the area not completely enclosed by the levee system is WCA-3A where a 7 mile section of the western border remains hydrologically

connected to the Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP). Four canals and their associated levees pass through the WCAs: the Miami Canal, L-35B Canal, L-67A Canal and L-67C Canal.

Many water control structures have been constructed to move water throughout the WCAs. Facilities designed to provide flow into the area include the S-6, S-7, S-8, S-9 and S-140 pump stations, and a series of gated spillways referred to collectively as the S-10 structures. Water is moved from WCA-2A to WCA-3A via the S-11 structures and through WCA-3A via the Miami Canal and a series of bridged openings under Alligator Alley (I-75). Water is released from WCA-3A through the S-12 and S-333 structures and the Pompano and North New River canals. The canals, levees and water control structures were constructed and are currently operated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District). The WCAs were constructed primarily to provide flood protection to adjacent agricultural and urban areas, and to serve as a source of freshwater for the heavily populated Lower East Coast. Secondary considerations were the need to manage the areas to benefit fish and wildlife, and to provide public recreation.

In 1994, the State of Florida enacted the Everglades Forever Act, mandated the SFWMD to construct the Everglades Construction Project (ECP). The ECP consists of six large constructed wetland treatment facilities, or STAs, containing approximately 44,000 acres of land previously used for agricultural purposes and other purposes. These areas are designed to treat runoff from the EAA and other sources prior to discharge into the Everglades Protection Area.

The ECP was designed to treat runoff from the EAA and other sources to meet an interim phosphorus concentration target of 50 parts per billion in discharges to the Everglades Protection Area (Burns and McDonnell, 1994). STA-1 West discharges into the L-7 borrow canal in the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (WCA-1). STA-1 East, currently under construction by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will discharge into the L-40 borrow canal in the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (WCA-1). STA-2 discharges to WCA-2A via the L-6 Borrow Canal. STA-3/4 will use the existing S-7 and S-8 pump stations as the outflow facilities. STA-5 discharges to the Miami Canal via the STA-5 discharge canal, where the majority of the water moves south to the northwest corner of WCA-3A. STA-5 discharges are delivered to the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area via a 240-cfs electric pump station (G-410) according to the operating schedule developed by an interagency group recognized in the FDEP permit for STA-5. STA-6 discharges to WCA-3A through the L-4 Borrow Canal. The future base condition assumes all of the treatment areas are completed and operational with the exception of STA-6 Section 2. STA-6 Section 2 was not included in hydrologic regional modeling for the Restudy since the conceptual design for the STA did not include this element (Burns and McDonnell, 1994). STA-6 Section 2 is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2006.

Water regulation schedules represent water level targets that govern the operations to store and release water from the WCAs. The water regulation schedule for WCA-2A was originally set too high to support Everglades habitat, and has been the subject of extensive research and experimentation. The original 1961 schedule called for water levels to fluctuate from 12 to 14.5 feet. The schedule was revised even higher in 1970 to a range of 13 to 14.5 feet with only a 30-day period at the lower end. Observed changes in the ecology of WCA-2A caused scientists in the early 1970s to initiate efforts to lower the water schedule and provide for annual drying of the interior marsh. Extended high water killed significant stands of trees, eroded islands, and caused other undesirable

vegetation changes in the area (Dineen, 1972, 1974; Worth, 1988). In 1980, the schedule was revised to an interim plan of 9.5 to 12.5 feet, an extreme drawdown that was in place for eight years. Extensive research during this time led to an interim schedule of 11 to 13 feet, which was adopted in 1989.

The regulation schedule for WCA-3A is perhaps the most complicated and difficult schedule to describe or implement. The schedule ranges from 9.5 to 10.5 feet, but includes a series of five zones to modify discharges to ENP when water levels are above or below the optimum target. The size of WCA-3A and the number of inflow and discharge points preclude intensive management of water levels in the area. Discharges at the southern end of the area flow directly into ENP. These discharges were modified three times in the past decade to alleviate problems resulting from too little discharge in the early years, and heavy flood discharges during the dry season, which impacted nesting wading birds and other wildlife during the 1970s and early 1980s.

The original schedule was set shortly after ENP and the SFWMD's predecessor agency was created. In 1970, Congress adopted an ENP-backed plan to establish a minimum monthly volume of water to be delivered to ENP. This resulted in significant flood damages from dry-season floodwaters, which were discharged from WCA-3A when the water schedule was exceeded. In 1983, Congress authorized an Experimental Program of Water Deliveries to ENP, which allowed an experiment with water releases based on rainfall and evaporation over the Everglades. This rainfall-based plan distributes water over a broader area than the original operating schedule whenever possible.

Currently, Holey Land Wildlife Management Area's water regulation schedule is based upon the initial operating plan agreed to by the SFWMD and the FGFWFC June 28, 1990. This schedule dictates that water stages in Holey Land Wildlife Management Area vary between a low of 11.5 feet MSL on May 16 to a high of 13.5 feet on November 1. When direct rainfall is unable to provide enough water to meet the schedule, water is pumped onto the area from the Miami Canal at the G-200 Pump Station in the northwest corner of the area. Other water enters the area from the G-201 Pump Station, which returns water to Holey Land from the exterior seepage canal. Outflow is through three sets of culverts along Holey Land's south boundary. In accordance with the 1990 Operational Agreement, after cattail coverage exceeded 2,000 acres, flashboards were placed in the outflow culverts and were set at 13.5 feet in order to retain water in the area as long as possible to reduce the need for pumping untreated water from the Miami Canal. Detailed topographic data on Holey Land Wildlife Management Area, collected after restoration began, found that average ground elevation was approximately 0.5 feet lower than previously thought and a verbal agreement was made between SFWMD and FGFWFC in July, 1993 to change the operational schedule to one that lies between 113 feet.

Additional research conducted by FGFWFC and the SFWMD staffs indicated that high water levels in Holey Land Wildlife Management Area contributed to the explosive growth of cattails in the area after restoration began, and that water levels above 12.5 feet drove deer from the marsh onto surrounding levees. In response to this information, on January 20, 1995, the FGFWFC proposed that the water schedule be again lowered, to 10.5-12.0 feet, a level that has since been used as a guideline by the SFWMD. A similar (10.75-12.0 feet) schedule was proposed by the FGFWFC on June 11, 1997, and discussions are currently underway to finalize an agreement recognizing this

proposed level. The water management plan is designed to simulate a natural hydroperiod for the purpose of restoring and preserving natural Everglades habitat.

The Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area is located in the north end of the Everglades ecosystem, in an area that has historically been dominated by nearly monospecific plains of dense sawgrass. Since drainage efforts began in the late 1800s, 74 percent of these sawgrass plains have been lost to agriculture. The Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area represents nearly 18 percent of the remainder of this important component of the Everglades. Because of development and drainage of surrounding areas, the hydropattern in the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area has shortened, causing a shift away from its historically sawgrass-dominated community. The distribution, timing and depths (hydropattern) of water in the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area is currently being reevaluated as new pumps and other features come online. Future efforts will focus on management to restore wetland structure.

While the current hydropattern in the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area does mimic the natural rise and fall associated with the wet and dry seasons, it does not receive enough rainfall to reach historic water levels during the wet season and dries much more quickly than normal due to the culverts mentioned above. The 1983 agreement between the FGFWFC, SFWMD and the Department of Environmental Regulation calls for the restoration of 0-1 feet water levels in the area. As part of the Everglades Construction Project (ECP), these levels have been used as initial goals of hydropattern restoration within the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area. Achievement of this goal will be a two stage process. First, all drainage culverts will be closed and the effects of this upon the hydropattern will be assessed. This information will be used to devise an operational schedule for the area, which will become effective upon completion of STA 5, and installation of the pumps allowing inflow into the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK AND FLORIDA BAY WATER MANAGEMENT

The Everglades National Park Drainage Basin is described in Cooper and Roy, 1991. The Everglades National Park Drainage Basin has an area of 1,684.5 square miles and is located in western Miami-Dade County (886.5 square miles), northwestern Monroe County (773.9 square miles) and southwestern Collier County (24.1 square miles) (Cooper and Roy, 1991). The basin includes all of ENP, the ENP expansion area, the remainder of the eastern Everglades and portions of the southern Glades Wildlife Environmental Area.

Internal Project Structures

The drainage basin for ENP consists primarily of undeveloped land. Areas of the park (located East of the L-67 Extension) were acquired as part of the ENP 1989 Expansion Act. All of this land is managed for environmental purposes. Central and South Florida Project structures are generally located outside of ENP and installed primarily for environmental purposes for the park or to separate drainage between the park and the area to the east of the L-31N and L-31. There are six project structures within ENP as listed below:

- the L-67 Extension,

- the plug in the Buttonwood Canal,
- S-175,
- S-332,
- S-346, and
- S-347.

The L-67 Extension was installed to separate what was the eastern boundary of ENP before the expansion authorized by the 1989 Expansion Act (Western Shark River Slough) from what was the privately owned lands east, which included the northeastern portions of Shark Slough. The canal excavated to provide the fill required to construct the L-67 Extension Levee serves as a getaway channel allowing water to move predominately South from the S-12 structures rather than South and East (Cooper and Roy, 1991). Approximately the lower third of the L-67 Extension canal has been backfilled to increase the spread of water. The Buttonwood Canal plug was installed at the mouth of the Buttonwood Canal on Florida Bay to prevent further intrusion of saltwater and improve conditions upstream of the canal. The S-175 and S-332 are used to deliver water to Taylor Slough, while S-346 and S-347 are used to control flow in the L-67 Extension.

External Project Inflows

Managed inflows to ENP are from the eastern farmland and from the north as an outlet of WCAs 3A and 3B. The managed flows delivered from WCA-3A through the S- 12 structures, S-333 and from WCA-3B through G-69. Other inflow points include the L- 31W Borrow Canal through S-332 and S-175 and from the C-111 between S-18C to S-197 as overland flow though the degraded canal berm into the panhandle of ENP.

Project Structures Controlling Inflow

Project structures controlling flow to the ENP basin include: S-12A, S-12B, S- 12C, S-12D, G-69, S-175, S-18C, S-197, S-332, S-333 and S-334. There are two internal structures controlling flow (S-346 and S-347), which control flow in Buttonwood Canal. There are three project structures, which are located in the basin but are not currently operated; the S-12E, S-12F and S-14. The S-12A, S-12B, S-12C and S-12D are identical gated spillways located in the L-29 between L-28 and L-67. They connect WCA-3A to the ENP basin. The first connection between WCA-3A and the south Miami-Dade canals occurred in 1978 with the completion of structures S-333 and S-334 in the L-29 Canal. These structures were installed to provide additional dry season water deliveries to L-31N. Structure G-69 connects WCA-3B to the ENP basin via the L-29 Canal. Project works are largely peripheral to the ENP basin and have as their primary function providing a supply of water to the basin.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - FLORIDA KEYS WATER MANAGEMENT

There is no overall surface water management canal infrastructure in the Florida Keys. The Central and Southern Florida Flood Control (C&SF) Project canal system has very little influence on

the Florida Keys, except in the estuarine areas of Florida Bay, where it controls the amount and timing of freshwater releases into the estuaries.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - NATURAL AREAS

The natural areas of the study area include the Rotenberger and Holey Land Wildlife Management Areas, the Loxahatchee NWR, WCAs 2 and 3, BCNP and ENP. The Rotenberger and Holey Land Wildlife Management Areas are adjacent to the EAA and are contained within the same hydrologic basin. The ECP, which is part of the future without plan condition, is designed to reduce phosphorus loading and achieve hydrologic restoration objectives for the natural areas by redirecting EAA runoff through stormwater treatment areas (STAs) and improving conveyance facilities to create preferred hydropatterns.

A fundamental underlying assumption for the Restudy is the full implementation of the state of Florida's Everglades Program contained in the Everglades Forever Act, Florida Statutes (F.S.) 373.4592 by December 31, 2006. Implementation of the Everglades Forever Act includes completion of construction of the STAs as described in the conceptual design for the ECP (Burns and McDonnell, 1994; scheduled to be completed in 2003), setting of a numeric phosphorus criterion for the Everglades Protection Area, by December 31, 2003, and compliance with that criterion by December 31, 2006.

In addition to the ECP and water quality treatment facilities developed as a result of the non-ECP requirements of the Everglades Forever Act, the currently authorized C-111 Canal Project and the Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park Project are assumed to be implemented in 2050. Implementation of the Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park Project was on hold until February, 2003 due to litigation involving the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' authority to implement the selected plan for the 8.5 Square Mile Area.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - FLORIDA BAY

An assumption of the future without plan condition is that both the Modified Water Deliveries to ENP and C-111 Canal projects are completed. Portions of the C-111 Canal Project have already been implemented according to the 1994 GRR while other portions were implemented as temporary facilities due to the jeopardy of the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow. The implemented/temporary facilities are listed below:

- Removal of the C-111 spoil (dredged material) mounds in the marsh on the southern leg of the C-111 Canal (1997) to promote overland flow out of the canal into the marshes in the northeastern part of Florida Bay.
- The S-332B pump station with 325 cfs directed to the West detention area and 250 cfs directed to the North detention area. The West

detention area covers approximately 160 acres and the North detention area covers approximately 240 acres.

- The S-332C pump station and 300 acre detention area.
- The S-332D pump station and approximately 800 acre detention area.
- Replacement of the single span bridge over Taylor Slough in the ENP with two longer span bridges and two box culverts.

Furthermore, agricultural nonpoint pollution sources in the C-111 Basin are currently being investigated as required by the non-ECP structure requirements of the Everglades Forever Act and the C-111/Modified Water Deliveries projects implementation process.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - FLORIDA KEYS

The major ongoing water quality improvement program in the Florida Keys, which is anticipated to result in improved water quality conditions in the future, is the Water Quality Protection Program of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Program. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) are jointly responsible for implementing water quality improvement activities throughout the Florida Keys Region as part of the Water Quality Protection Program. Implementation of these activities will result in improved water quality conditions in the Florida Keys in the future.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - WATER CONSERVATION AREAS (WCAS) AND EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK RAINFALL-BASED RAINFALL WATER DELIVERY PLANS

In the future without plan condition, the rainfall delivery plan, as defined in the Lower East Coast (LEC) Plan is based on antecedent rainfall and natural system hydropatterns for WCA-2A and 3A and ENP, with quantities to approximate best management practices (BMPs) replacement water quantities.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - EMERGENCY INTERIM PLAN

The Emergency Interim Plan for Florida Bay (Chapter 373.4593 F.S.) was passed by the Florida legislature in May of 1994. Its purpose was to:

Provide for the release of water into Taylor Slough and Florida Bay by up to 800 cfs, in order to optimize the quantity, timing, distribution, and quality of fresh water, and promote sheetflow into Taylor Slough.

Section 2(e) called for acquisition of the western three sections of the agricultural area known as the Frog Pond in Miami-Dade County. The SFWMD took title to all eight sections of the Frog Pond in February of 1995. This effectively became Phase 1 of the Emergency Interim Plan, as the acquisition of this land eliminated land use conflicts between ENP and farming occurring in the Frog Pond. Elimination of these conflicts prevented the unnatural reduction in canal stages that had previously taken place each year in the fall to facilitate those farming activities. In addition, it allows greater flexibility in implementation of a rainfall driven plan for water levels in L-31W.

Phase 2 of the Emergency Interim Plan was designed to provide additional pumping capability into the L-31W Canal, which formed the western boundary of the Frog Pond. Pump Station S-332D (C-111 Project and Experimental Program of Water Deliveries to ENP) was built for this need and increased pumpage to 500 cfs.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - NATURAL AREAS

Approximately 18 water body segments within Loxahatchee NWR (WCA-1), and WCAs 2 and 3 were listed as use-impaired on the FDEP 1998 303(d) list. Pollutants/water quality parameters contributing to use-impaired conditions include: excessive nutrient loads, low levels of DO, high levels of mercury (based on fish consumption advisories), un-ionized ammonia, coliform bacteria, total suspended solids (TSS) and certain trace metals. There are also four water body segments in ENP on the 303(d) list. Those water body segments include: ENP Shark Slough, ENP L67 Culvert at US 41, Taylor Slough and the Tamiami Canal. Problem constituents in ENP waters include low levels of DO and high levels of nutrients, mercury (based on fish consumption advisories), iron, other trace metals. Many of the water body segments in the WCAs and ENP may eventually be removed from subsequent 303(d) lists because the Everglades Forever Act includes schedules and strategies for achieving compliance with water quality standards, consistent with the requirements of the Clean Water Act.

Water quality conditions in the Rotenberger and Holey Land Wildlife Management Areas, Loxahatchee NWR, the WCAs and in downstream ENP are expected to be significantly improved in 2050 compared to current (without the ECP) conditions.

In the southern Everglades, implementation of the C-111 and Modified Water Deliveries Projects may also involve developing water quality treatment features necessary to assure that regulatory requirements are met. Minimally, implementation of the C-111 Project involves acquisition of the Frog Pond agricultural area adjacent to the C-111/L-31W levee/borrow canal system, which will result in a net reduction of pollution loading (nutrients, pesticides) into ENP via the existing canal system from nonpoint source agricultural runoff.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - FLORIDA BAY

Barnes Sound is the only segment of Florida Bay included on the FDEP 1998 303(d) list. Excessive nutrients, chlorides and low levels of DO were identified as constituents of concern in

ambient water quality monitoring. Other areas of Florida Bay also experience periodic water quality problems. Salinity is the primary water quality parameter of concern in the bay. Bay waters are periodically hypersaline or too low in salinity, depending upon the frequency of hurricanes and other significant storm events and flood release discharges from Central and Southern Florida Project features. Advective conditions in the bay have also contributed to extensive algal blooms. Water temperature levels are also periodically elevated above prescribed temperature limitations. Seatrout collected from Florida Bay also exhibit elevated mercury levels.

Water quality conditions in northeastern Florida Bay should improve in 2050 compared to existing (1995) conditions. Full implementation of the Biscayne Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan elements should also benefit water quality conditions in Florida Bay also. When fully completed, it is anticipated that the C- 111 Project would improve water quality conditions in the vicinity of Taylor Slough through the implementation of structural and operational modifications necessary to achieve preferred hydrologic conditions. Compared to existing conditions, the net load of agricultural nonpoint source pollution entering the C-111 Canal and south into Florida Bay should be reduced in 2050. The Modified Water Deliveries to ENP Project is also expected to result in water quality improvements in Florida Bay through the delivery of increased volumes of freshwater to the bay via Northeast Shark River Slough.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES - FLORIDA KEYS

The Florida Keys as a whole were identified as having use-impaired water quality on the FDEP 1998 303(d) list; however, water quality problems are generally restricted to canals, marina basins and nearshore waters as opposed to adjacent open waters. The principal pollutants of concern are excessive nutrient loading and fecal coliform bacteria from inadequate wastewater treatment and disposal facilities, although low DO levels are also common in canals of the Florida Keys.

Due to recently imposed growth management regulations and limitations on expanded urban development, the population of the Keys should not greatly increase by 2050. In addition, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Plan (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1996) contains a Water Quality Protection Program developed by the USEPA (USEPA, 1996) in cooperation with the Administration and the FDEP. The Water Quality Protection Program Document, approved in 1996, contains a set of initial recommendations for corrective actions, monitoring, research and education/ outreach. These recommendations have been included in a Water Quality Action Plan focusing on wastewater, storm water, marinas and live-aboard vessels, landfills, hazardous materials, mosquito spraying, canals and research and monitoring. If the recommended wastewater and storm water corrective actions are implemented, water quality conditions in the Florida Keys Region are expected to improve in 2050 compared to existing conditions.

The USEPA, other federal, state and local agencies and citizen stakeholders have identified wastewater infrastructure as the single most important investment to improve nearshore and canal water quality. The cost of wastewater improvements necessary to improve nearshore and canal water quality in the Florida Keys has been estimated at between \$184 to \$418 million, depending on the percentage reduction in wastewater nutrient loadings to be achieved and which treatment system or

systems are ultimately selected. Stormwater management improvements in the Florida Keys area are also needed. The cost of stormwater management and treatment necessary to reduce pollutant loadings in the Florida Keys is estimated at between \$370 to \$680 million, depending on the percentage reduction in storm water pollutant loadings targeted to be achieved and which areas are selected to be retrofitted. Water quality improvements in Florida Keys canals and nearshore areas are expected to result from improved wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal implemented through the Monroe County Wastewater Master Plan and through implementation of the Monroe County Stormwater Master Plan, both of which, are major components of the Water Quality Protection Program.

LAND USE - WATER CONSERVATION AREAS (WCAS)

The WCAs are located in western and southwestern Palm Beach, western Broward and northwestern Miami-Dade counties, Florida. They consist of WCAs 1, 2 and 3 and encompass approximately 878,000 acres. For management purposes, the area has been subdivided into several units: WCA-1, WCA-2A, WCA-2B, WCA-3A and WCA-3B. The WCAs are bordered on the east by the Sawgrass Expressway, U.S. Highway 27, and Krome Avenue; on the south by U.S. Highway 41, on the west by Levee 28 (L-28) and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida Federal Reservation; and to the north by L-4, L-5 and L-6.

The WCAs are located near several state and federal land and water resources. Lake Okeechobee is approximately 25 miles north. State and federal lands that border the WCAs includes Holeey Land Wildlife Management Area, Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida Federal Indian Reservation, Big Cypress Indian Reservation (Seminoles), BCNP and ENP. The Big Cypress Area of Critical State Concern is adjacent the southwest boundary of WCA-3A. As part of the Central and Southern Florida Project (C&SF), land and flowage easements were obtained for the construction of the three WCAs. Construction of the required levees and canals began in 1949 and the WCAs became functional in 1962. The USACE designed, constructed, and currently participates in the management of the WCAs and the water resource.

The SFWMD serves as the local management agent under the direction of the USACE. WCA-1 became the Loxahatchee NWR in 1961, and is managed by the USFWS. WCAs 2 and 3 were designated as the Everglades Wildlife Management Area in 1952, and are operated by the FWC, formerly the FGFWFC, under the terms of a cooperative management agreement with SFWMD (formerly Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District). The agreement became effective on 1 March 1952 with an initial term of 25 years and three automatically successive terms of 15 years each. The SFWMD holds fee title to approximately 27 percent of the WCAs, and has flowage easements over the remainder. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIITF) owns approximately 55 percent of the WCAs. Other public agencies own approximately 4 percent, with private landowners owning an estimated 14 percent of the remainder of the area. The identity of the private landowners and the location of the inholdings are, for the most part, unknown; Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties have little or no land records for lands in the Everglades Water Management Area.

In 1982, an agreement between the TIITF, the FGFWFC, the SFWMD and the Miccosukees was prepared to clarify the documentation and respective rights and responsibilities of the state and the Miccosukees in the 189,000 acres of reservation lands within WCA-3.

The SFWMD has used “Save Our Rivers” (SOR) funds since 1982 to purchase land in the Everglades Water Management Area. Section (s.) 373.59, F.S., created the SOR program, and established the Water Management Lands Trust Fund that contains monies designated for the purchase of environmentally sensitive riverine lands. Funds for SOR are provided by a portion of documentary stamp tax on properties purchased in Florida. SOR legislation calls for the management and maintenance of lands acquired with SOR funds in an “environmentally acceptable manner, and to the extent practicable, in such a way as to restore and protect their natural state and condition.” The legislation encourages the use of SOR lands for public outdoor recreational activities compatible with the primary goal of environmental protection and enhancement.

Governor Bob Graham initiated the Save Our Everglades (SOE) program on August 9, 1983. This program was designed to improve environmental conditions in the Everglades system. Two of the seven program initiatives directly affected the management of the Everglades Water Management Area. Initiative 4 required the FGFWFC to manage the Everglades Water Management Area deer herd at a level that could survive moderate flooding conditions. Initiative 5 incorporated hydrological improvements in the conversion of State Road (SR) 84 to Interstate 75 (Alligator Alley). The five remaining program initiatives provided secondary benefits to the Everglades Water Management Area by providing for land acquisition and hydrological improvements that enhanced water quality and delivery to the area.

The three major roadways that affect the WCAs are U.S. Highway 27, which separates WCA-2 from WCA-3, U.S. Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail), which borders WCA-3 to the south, and Interstate 75, which bisects WCA-3. The roadways, in combination with the existing levee and water delivery systems, have altered the natural hydroperiod of the area and disrupted sheetflow throughout the Everglades Water Management Area. In the past, there has been substantial environmental damage to the WCAs due to severe flooding and drought caused by these alterations.

The Holey Land Wildlife Management Area is a tract of Everglades marsh comprising 35,350 acres, located in the southwest corner of Palm Beach County. It is located immediately north of WCA-3, on the east side of the Miami Canal. It is 17 miles south of Lake Okeechobee and approximately 43 miles north of ENP. A large portion of the property came to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIITF) through statehood as part of the Federal Swamp and Overflowed Lands Act of 1850. Some of the property may have been acquired under the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) acquisition fund in the early 1970s. The remainder of the property was purchased in order to facilitate restoration of the hydroperiod for the area, possibly through the SOE Program. Lease #2343, dated July 30, 1968 and issued by the TIITF, leased the area to the FGFWFC for fish and wildlife management purposes. Since that time, the FWC, formerly the FGFWFC, has managed the area for public hunting, fishing and recreational use. From 1968 until 1975, the area was apparently included as part of the Everglades Wildlife Management Area. In 1975, the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission established the area as the Holey Land Wildlife Management Area. Past uses, prior to 1968, are unknown.

Man-made structures include levees associated with the Miami Canal and the L-5 canal. A series of canals and borrow pits enclose the area's northern and eastern boundaries. Boat ramps are located at the northwest (G-200) and southwest (G-201) pump stations. There are three water gauges (Holey G, Holey 1, Holey 2) within the marsh, with another located in the eastern boundary levee (G-203D). These structures are operated by the SFWMD in accordance with a management agreement with the FGFWFC. The SFWMD also maintains public roads associated with the Miami Canal and L-5 levees. The road along the crest of the northern and eastern boundary levee is closed to the public because it is too narrow to accommodate two-way public vehicular use. Florida Power and Light maintains high-tension power lines and support pads on the southern boundary of the Water Management Area, and a small electrical transmission line along the Miami Canal levee. A series of 54 artificial islands were constructed in the south- and east-central portions of the area in 1974 and 1975.

The Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area is an area of Everglades marsh comprising 27,810 acres located in the southwest corner of Palm Beach County. The Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area is located immediately north of WCA-3 on the west side of the Miami Canal. It is 17 miles south of Lake Okeechobee and approximately 43 miles north of ENP. Holey Land Wildlife Management Area is immediately along the east boundary of the Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area. The area was named for Ray Rotenberger, who constructed a small camp and airfield in the area during the late 1950s or early 1960s. Approximately 6,300 acres of the original Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) project were purchased by the state on February 17, 1975. Since that time all but about 3,500 acres have been acquired. Although biologists were performing surveys and checking harvests in the Rotenberger area as early as 1970, and it may have been part of the Sawgrass Hunt Area at this time, the area was not included in the FGFWFC wildlife management area system until August 26, 1975. The Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area has been operated under lease # 3581 dated November 13, 1979 from the TIITF since that time, with 6 major lease amendments (1987, 1989, 1990, 1994). This lease also includes some lands on the east side of the Miami Canal that are managed as part of the Holey Land Wildlife Management Area and some 14,000 acres south of the L-4 Canal in Broward County that are operated as part of the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area (known as the Seminole Indian Lands).

Man-made structures include levees associated with the Miami Canal, Manley Ditch, L-4 Canal, the Florida Power and Light Powerline, the Guerry Sugarcane Farm (834 acres), and the abandoned Cousin's Ranch (940 acres) and Holper (100 acres) Properties. A small camp and airstrip were built in the late 1950s or early 1960s by Ray Rotenberger. Several cabins and other structures associated with that camp. There used to be a cabin on Wall's Head, but it was abandoned and fell apart some years ago. Another cabin on Cousin's Ranch near the Miami Canal (Wildlife Officer's Camp) has also been abandoned, but is still standing. Several sets of culverts drain from Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area into the Miami Canal and L-4 Canal, and there are a series of culverts underneath the Powerline Road. There are two SFWMD water gauges in Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area (Rotenberger North and South). Sometime in the late 1950s or early 1960s an exploratory oil well was drilled near the south-central boundary. Using shellrock and material dredged from the wetlands a 2-acre support pad and access road to the L-4 North and Powerline levees was constructed, but this site was soon abandoned.

LAND USE - EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK AND FLORIDA BAY

As the region has grown its land use patterns have dramatically changed. In South Florida the character of the land has acted as one of the constraints dictating early settlement patterns. Topography, soils, and aquifer maps illustrate the vulnerability of South Florida to inundation. On the east coast, the Atlantic Coastal Ridge and associated pine rocklands, due to its higher elevation and more stable soils, were the first to develop. As the coastal ridge developed and available lands were depleted (particularly over the last few decades), other less suitable lands were developed in the sprawl pattern characteristic of current day South Florida.

Everglades National Park encompasses 2,353 square miles of wetlands, uplands and submerged lands at the southern end of the Florida peninsula. The topography is extremely low and flat, with most of the area below 4 feet NGVD. The highest elevations are found in the northeastern section of the park and are from 6 to 7 feet NGVD. The saline wetlands, including mangrove and buttonwood forests, salt marshes and coastal prairie that fringe the coastline are subject to the influence of salinity from tidal action.

Everglades National Park, authorized by Congress in 1934 and established in 1947, was established to protect the unique tropical biological resources of the southern Everglades ecosystem. It was the first national park to be established to preserve purely biological (versus geological) resources. The park's authorizing legislation mandated that it be managed as:

...wilderness, [where] no development... or plan for the entertainment of visitors shall be undertaken which will interfere with the preservation intact of the unique flora and fauna and the essential primitive natural condition now prevailing in this area.

This mandate to preserve wilderness is one of the strongest in the legislative history of the National Park System.

Recognized by the international community, as well as the national and state governments, ENP is important, as a natural, recreational and cultural resource. At the international level, the park is a World Heritage Site, an International Biosphere Reserve and a Wetland of International Significance. In 1978, Congress designated much of the park, (86 percent) as Wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964. In 1997, this area was redesignated the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness. Hell's Bay Canoe Trail and the Wilderness Waterway are designated National Trails. The state of Florida has designated the park an Outstanding Florida Water.

The park preserves a unique landscape where the temperate zone meets the subtropics, blending the wildlife and vegetation of both. The landscape includes sawgrass sloughs, tropical hardwood hammocks, offshore coral reefs, mangrove forests, lakes, ponds and bays, providing habitat for dozens of threatened and endangered species of plants and animals. It is the largest designated wilderness, at 1,296,500 acres, east of the Rocky Mountains. It protects the largest continuous stand of sawgrass prairie in North America, the most significant breeding grounds for tropical wading birds in North America, over 230,100 acres of mangrove forest (the largest in the western hemisphere), a nationally significant estuarine complex in Florida Bay and significant ethnographic resources, revealing 2,000 years of human occupation.

Agriculture

Little or no agricultural production takes place in these regions, which includes ENP, Florida Bay, the Ten Thousand Islands and Whitewater Bay. However, water management decisions made for these regions may affect other regional farmland and should, therefore, be considered carefully.

LAND USE - FLORIDA KEYS

In 1975, Florida designated Monroe County an Area of Critical State Concern under the authority of Chapter 380, F.S. This legislation was designed to preserve and protect the county's unique natural resources, which were being degraded by large development projects. It gave the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) the responsibility of overseeing all development activities within the designated area. The legislation required both the drafting of a comprehensive plan and development regulations designed to set the county's growth-management standards, over which the state has final review and approval.

Significant features of the plan include the “down-zoning” of large natural areas (excluding Key West, Key Colony Beach and Layton), and the establishment of the Monroe County Land Authority, which is responsible for purchasing these down-zoned areas. The plan was also designed to preserve the contiguous areas of habitat as biologically functional units, specifying that required open-space areas may not be altered. It also contained the rudiments of the concept of “concurrency,” which requires that a project cannot be completed without the public infrastructure necessary to support it.

Monroe County and its sister municipalities are currently revising their comprehensive plans under Chapter 163, F.S. In general, Chapter 163 legislates more specific standards, significantly expands the concept of concurrency, and allows the local government to set a “level of service” for hurricane evacuation that cannot be exceeded as a result of new development. However, because the county is an Area of Critical State Concern, the county must still meet the standards of Chapter 380, F.S.

Existing Land Use

The inhabited Keys make up only five percent of Monroe County's total land area (65,500 of 1.2 million acres). The county also contains over 99,000 acres of the Everglades, but this area is almost entirely within ENP and BCNP. The majority of the county, consequently, is classified as “conservation land.”

Within the county, the unincorporated area is distinguished from the four incorporated areas of Key West, Key Colony Beach, Layton and Islamorada. Within the unincorporated area, land use is also apportioned differently between the Upper, Middle and Lower Keys. The types of land use can be defined as residential, commercial, industrial or public facilities and buildings; historical buildings and districts; military facilities; and recreation, conservation and vacant land.

Residential Land

The portion of land used for residential purposes ranges from 12 percent in the Lower Keys to 58 percent in Key Colony Beach. The small percentage of residential use in the Lower Keys is due to the high proportion of conservation land, primarily in the National Key Deer Refuge. The relatively high proportion of residential development in Key Colony Beach reflects the city's reliance on Marathon for commercial and other use categories. Within the unincorporated area, the majority of residential development (78 percent) consists of single-family units. The unincorporated area also has the majority of the county's mobile homes, although the total area is relatively small. The cities of Key West and Key Colony Beach have substantial duplex development. In the city of Key West, the single-family/duplex zoning category accounts for 62 percent of all residential area. Key Colony Beach has similar percentages.

Commercial Land

The proportion of commercial land in each area is similar, although there are significant differences between the Upper, Middle and Lower Keys. In general, commercially zoned land accounts for about four percent of land-use acreage within the Keys. The Middle Keys contain significantly higher proportions because of the large amount of commercial land in Marathon. The lower levels in the Lower Keys reflect the large amount of refuge conservation land.

Industrial Land

The cities of Key West, Key Colony Beach and Layton contain no significant industrial development, and rely on the adjacent unincorporated areas for their industrial needs. Two industries, rock mining and marine repair and salvage define industrial use in the Keys. The majority of rock mining operations are in Stock Island and Marathon. Other small-scale industrial businesses are located in Stock Island, Big Pine Key, Marathon and Key Largo.

Public Facilities and Buildings

As much as eight percent of Key West is allocated to public buildings and facilities (excluding recreational uses), while the unincorporated area, Key Colony Beach and Layton provide one percent or less.

Historic Buildings and Districts

Within the cities of Key Colony Beach and Layton, and in the unincorporated areas of the Keys, virtually no acreage is allocated for historical lands. There are, however, historic structures and buildings outside Key West, including those on Pigeon Key and the Carysfort Light off North Key Largo, both of which, are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The city of Key West also considers large areas of "old town" historic and, as a result, requires additional permits before allowing development. In addition, the city has established a Historic Architectural Review Commission to ensure that the traditional character and appearance of the area is maintained.

Military Facilities

Military facilities are located exclusively in Key West and the Lower Keys. About 25 percent of Key West's land is used for military purposes. In the Lower Keys there are three military facilities that make up five percent of all land in the unincorporated area.

Recreational Facilities

The city of Key West provides about seven percent of its land area for recreational purposes, while the Lower and Upper Keys provide less than two percent each. The Middle Keys provide 11 percent, Key Colony Beach nine percent, and Layton none. These numbers may be somewhat misleading, however, as they are derived primarily from a list of publicly and privately owned lands that provide recreational activities. Many private owners of resort areas provide recreational facilities geared toward water activities that include swimming pools and/or tennis courts.

Conservation Land

Conservation land makes up about 34 percent of all unincorporated land use within the Keys. The largest proportion is in the Lower Keys, and is associated with the National Key Deer and Great White Heron refuges (28 percent). In the Upper Keys (51 percent), conservation land is located primarily in North Key Largo. The cities of Layton and Key Colony Beach have no conservation land. Within the city of Key West, conservation land is undeveloped and categorized as open water, freshwater islands, tidal wetlands, mangrove and hammock. Some of the land is in private ownership and, therefore, could be subject to future development. However, Monroe County Land Authority has been acquiring substantial areas around the "Salt Ponds" area of Key West. A total of 550 acres remains undeveloped in Key West.

Vacant Land

About 210,000 acres of land are potentially available for development, representing just over 34 percent of the Keys' total land area. In the unincorporated area of the county, vacant land is the largest land-use category. Ten percent of the county's vacant land is divided into nearly 15,000 vacant lots. These lots represent the only reasonably buildable property remaining in the Keys, and make up a substantial proportion of the total potential single-family development area.

Florida Reef Tract

The Florida Reef Tract is an arcuate band of living coral reefs paralleling the Keys. The reefs are located on a narrow shelf that drops off into the Straits of Florida. The shelf slopes seaward at a 0.06 degree angle into Hawk Channel, which is several miles wide and averages 50 feet deep. From Hawk Channel, the shelf slopes upward to a shallower area containing numerous patch reefs. The outer edge is marked by a series of bank reefs and sand banks that are subject to open tidal exchange with the Atlantic Ocean. The warm, clear, naturally low-nutrient waters in this region are conducive to reef development.

ELIGIBLE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN (CERP) PROJECTS

WCA 3 Decompartmentalization and Sheetflow Enhancement Project - Part 1

Part 1 of the Water Conservation Area 3 Decompartmentalization and Sheetflow Enhancement Project includes the modification or removal of levees, canals and water control structures in Water Conservation Area 3A and B located in western Broward County. This project includes backfilling the Miami Canal in Water Conservation Area 3 from one to two miles south of the S-8 pump station down to the East Coast Protective Levee. To make up for the loss of water supply conveyance to the Lower East Coast urban areas from the Miami Canal, the capacity of the North New River Canal within Water Conservation Area 3A will be doubled to convey water supply deliveries to Miami-Dade County as necessary. Modifications will also be made to the eastern section of Tamiami Trail, which includes elevating the roadway through the installation of a series of bridges between L-31N Levee and the L-67 Levees. The eastern portion of L-29 Levee and Canal will also be degraded in the same area as the Tamiami Trail modifications. The purpose of this project is to restore sheetflow and reduce unnatural discontinuities in the Everglades landscape. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org.

C-111 Spreader Canal

The C-111 Spreader Canal project will alter the 1994 design for the C-111 project by adding the following enhancements: constructing a 3,200-acre stormwater treatment area; enlarging pump station S-332E from 50 cfs to 500 cfs; extending the spreader canal approximately two miles under U.S. Highway 1 and Card Sound Rd. to the Model Lands; and installing culverts under U.S. Highway 1 and Card Sound Road. The project also will fill in the southern reach of the C-111 canal below C-111 Spreader to S-197, remove S- 18C and S-197 and backfill C-110. The project purposes are to re-hydrate the Model Lands, establish sheet flow and hydro patterns that will sustain ecosystems in the Southern Glades and Model lands, provide more natural sheetflow to Florida Bay by eliminating point sources of freshwater discharges through C-111 to the estuarine systems of Manatee Bay and Barnes Sound, and maintain some level of flood protection for agricultural and urban areas in the project area. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org.

Florida Keys Tidal Restoration Project

This project includes the use of bridges or culverts to restore the tidal connection between Florida Bay and the Atlantic Ocean in Monroe County. The four locations are as follows: 1) Tarpon Creek, just south of Mile Marker 54 on Fat Deer Key (width 150 feet); 2) unnamed creek between Fat Deer Key and Long Point Key, south of Mile Marker 56 (width 450 feet); 3) tidal connection adjacent to Little Crawl Key (width 300 feet); and 4) tidal connection between Florida Bay and Atlantic Ocean at Mile Marker 57 (width 2,400 feet). The purpose of this project is to restore the tidal connection that was eliminated in the early 1900's during the construction of Flagler's railroad. Restoring the circulation to areas of surface water that have been impeded and stagnant for decades will significantly improve water quality, benthic floral and faunal communities, larval distribution of

both recreational and commercial species (i.e. spiny lobster), and the overall hydrology of Florida Bay. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org.

Flow to NW and Central WCA-3A

This project includes relocation and modifications to pump stations and development of a spreader canal system located in the northwest corner and west-central portions of Water Conservation Area 3A in western Broward County. The purpose of this project is to increase environmental water supply availability, increase depths and extend wetland hydropatterns in the northwest corner and west-central portions of Water Conservation Area 3A. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org.

Everglades National Park Seepage Management

This project includes relocating and enhancing L-31N, groundwater wells, and sheetflow delivery system adjacent to Everglades National Park located in Miami-Dade County. More detailed planning, design and pilot studies will be conducted to determine the appropriate technology to control seepage from Everglades National Park. These studies and tests will also determine the appropriate amount of wet season groundwater flow control that will minimize potential impacts to Miami-Dade County's West Wellfield and freshwater flows to Biscayne Bay.

The purpose of this project is to improve water deliveries to Northeast Shark River Slough and restore wetland hydropatterns in Everglades National Park by reducing levee and groundwater seepage and increasing sheetflow.

Based upon recommendations of the L-31N Pilot Test, seepage management will be implemented to control levee seepage flow across L-31N adjacent to Everglades National Park. Some of the technologies under consideration may include levee cutoff walls or the use of ground water wells adjacent to L-31N and to capture and pump seepage water back to Everglades National Park. Excess water from upstream natural areas such as WCA-2B may additionally be diverted into a buffer area adjacent to Everglades National Park where sheetflow will be reestablished. Further, this project includes relocation of the Modified Water Deliveries structure S-356 to provide more effective water deliveries to Everglades National Park. New discharges to Everglades National Park will be designed to meet applicable water quality criteria. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org.

OTHER ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Florida Bay Restoration Initiative

The ecological state and future of Florida Bay are highly dependent on fresh water delivery to the Bay. Being at the "end of the pipe" of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades (K-O-E) watershed, changes in land use and water management throughout the watershed may impact Florida Bay. Protection and restoration of Florida Bay is proceeding through implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and other programs, such as Minimum Flows

and Levels (MFLs). CERP projects and MFLs could potentially change the flow of fresh water to the bay, with the expectation that these changes will restore both wetland and estuarine ecosystems. However, in order to meet this expectation, we need to be able to accurately predict how specific modifications of water quantity, timing, distribution, and quality affect the Florida Bay ecosystem.

The Florida Bay Restoration Initiative is focused on assuring that appropriate tools and data exist to accurately and adequately predict and assess the effects of any changes in fresh water flows on the ecology and biology of Florida Bay. The definition and specification of restoration targets and alternatives is underway through the Florida Bay and Florida Keys Feasibility Study. However, there are some essential elements that must be addressed outside of CERP to assure successful restoration. Projects that could be completed through the Initiative are:

- determining the fate and effect of Everglades dissolved organic matter, which has direct water quality consequences for Everglades and Florida Bay restoration;
- determining biological responses (i.e. seagrass, lobsters, fish, manatees, etc.) to changes in the timing, quantity, and distribution of fresh water into Florida Bay; and
- map baseline information on estuarine coastline conditions to measure physical responses to hydrologic restoration and measured sea level rise.

Given Florida Bay's "end of the pipe" location, changes in water management and existing restoration plans for the benefit of Florida Bay will have consequences for the supply, distribution, and water quality improvement strategies for the entire K-O-E watershed. We thus need scientifically defensible information to assure that appropriate policy decisions are made that will result in overall ecological restoration. The Florida Bay Restoration Initiative could assist in enhancing the overall knowledge base beyond those projects addressed in CERP, and provide greater assurance in predicting ecological and biological responses to hydrologic changes.

Chapter 9

WATER PRESERVE AREAS, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY REGIONS

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS - WATER PRESERVE AREAS, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY REGIONS

The Lower East Coast area, which consists of the coastal ridge section in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties, is a strip of sandy land which lies east of part of the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) (**Figure 11**). The area is made up of the Water Preserve Areas (WPAs), Miami-Dade County and North Palm Beach County regions. The ground surface of the flatlands in the west ranges from about 25 feet NGVD (National Geodetic Vertical Datum) in the upper part of the region to about 5 feet NGVD in lower Miami-Dade County. The Atlantic Coastal Ridge is comprised of broad, low dunes and ridges with elevations ranging from 10 to 25 feet NGVD. This ridge area ranges from 2 – 4 miles in width at its northern edge to its southern edge in Miami. South of Miami the ridge becomes less pronounced but significantly wider.

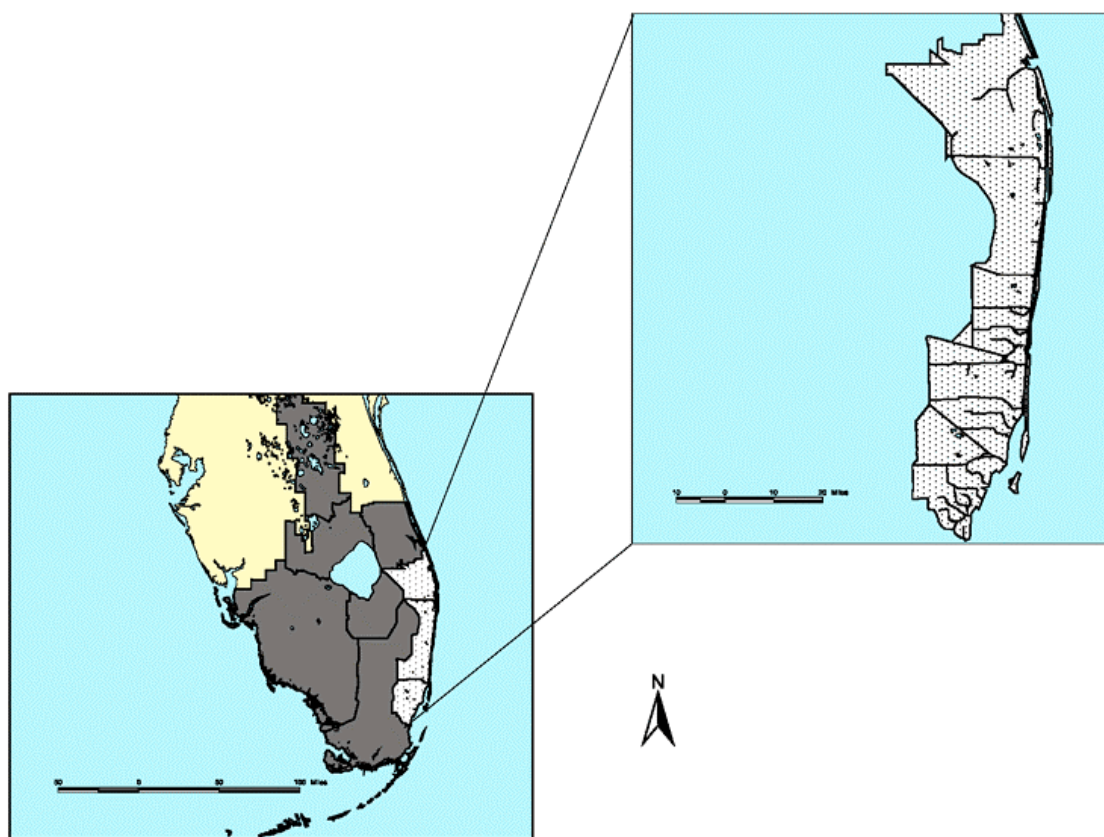


Figure 11: Water Preserve Areas, Miami-Dade County and North Palm Beach County

The Lower East Coast area is the most densely populated part of the state. The largest population centers are near the coast and include the cities of Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood and West Palm Beach. Water levels in coastal canals are controlled near the coastal shoreline to prevent over drainage and to prevent saltwater intrusion. Low water levels in these canals may enable saltwater to migrate into the groundwater, wellfields and natural freshwater systems, upon which the urban areas depend for a potable water supply.

This area is characterized by sandy flatlands to the west, the sandy coastal ridge and the coastal marsh and mangrove swamp areas along the Atlantic seaboard. The northern portion, generally that part north of Miami-Dade County, marks the shore of a higher Pleistocene sea and occurs as one or more relict beach ridges. The southern portion appears to be marine deposited sands or marine limestones.

Extensive development has resulted in nearly complete urbanization of the coastal region from West Palm Beach southward through Miami, and physiographical characteristics of the region have been greatly overshadowed. South of Miami, in Miami- Dade County, this coastal area widens as the Everglades bends to the west to include urban areas and agricultural areas that extend almost to the southern coast. Miami-Dade County's agricultural industry covers more than 83,000 acres in the southwest of the coastal metropolitan area. Vegetables, tropical fruits and nursery plants are grown in this area.

Biscayne Bay is a shallow, tidal sound located near the extreme southeastern part of Florida. Biscayne Bay, its tributaries and Card Sound are designated by the state of Florida as aquatic preserves, while Card and Barnes Sounds are part of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. A significant portion of the central and southern portions of Biscayne Bay comprise Biscayne National Park.

The original extent of Biscayne Bay approximated 300 square miles, but it has since undergone major modifications, particularly in its northern portions, as a result of development. The Bay extends about 55 miles in a south-southwesterly direction from Dumfoundling Bay on the north to Barnes Sound on the south. It varies in width from less than 1 mile in the vicinity of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway passage to Dumfoundling Bay, to about 10 miles between the mainland and the Safety Valve Shoals to the east.

While there has been extensive dredging and filling within northern Biscayne Bay, the area still supports a productive and healthy seagrass bed and a few tracts of natural shoreline remain. Northern Biscayne Bay's headwaters are now considered to include dredged areas known as Maule Lake and Dumfoundling Bay, near the northern boundary of Miami-Dade County.

Central and, in particular, southern Biscayne Bay have been impacted less by development than northern Bay. For instance, mangrove-lined coastal wetlands extend from Matheson Hammock Park south along the entire shoreline of Biscayne National Park, Card and Barnes Sounds, a distance of approximately 30 miles. These coastal wetlands are the largest tract of undeveloped wetlands remaining in South Florida outside of Everglades National Park (ENP), the Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) and the WCAs.

Biscayne National Park, in southern Biscayne Bay was established in 1980 to protect and preserve this nationally significant marine ecosystem consisting of mangrove shorelines, a shallow bay, undeveloped islands and living coral reefs. The park is 180,000 acres in size and 95 percent water. The shoreline of southern Biscayne Bay is lined with a forest of mangroves and the bay bottom is covered with dense seagrass beds. The Park has been designated a sanctuary for the Florida spiny lobster. Biscayne Bay and Biscayne National Park support a multitude of marine wildlife, such as lobster, shrimp, fish, sea turtles and manatees. The coral reefs within the Biscayne National Park support a diverse community of marine plant and wildlife.

Depending upon the flood stages reached, all the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project (C&SF Project) canals in adjacent Miami-Dade County can carry floodwaters to Biscayne Bay. However, much of the time, discharges from project canals represent primarily runoff or seepage from within the flood protected area of the county. These flows originate in the extensive networks of secondary drainage canals and storm sewers that discharge into the project canals. Supplementing the complex system of project canals and secondary drainage systems are many hundreds of other storm water drainage canals and storm sewer outfalls within Miami-Dade County that discharge freshwater directly into Biscayne Bay.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - WATER PRESERVE AREAS, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY

This Region functions as a multipurpose canal system with several objectives including: flood control, urban water supply, industrial water supply, agriculture water use, protection and enhancement of wetland and estuarine systems, prevention of saltwater intrusion and recreation. The Lower East Coast system is capable of moving vast quantities of water during the wet season, as well as supplying water (if available) during the dry season or as needed. Important freshwater canals are, from north to south, C-44, C- 18, C-17, C-51, Hillsboro Canal, North New River Canal, Miami Canal, New River Canal, C-9, C-8, C-7, C-4, C-100, C-100c, C-1, C-102, C-103, C-109, C-110, C-111 and the South Miami-Dade Conveyance System.

Approximately half of the acreage farmed in the Lower East Coast is irrigated (UFBEBR, 1995). This region is highly dependent on the system of canals, levees and other structures for flood control in the wet season and water supply in the dry season. Providing adequate drainage and flood control to the South Miami-Dade County agricultural area is a serious challenge because the farmland is directly adjacent to ENP.

Agricultural land provides a buffer between urbanization and Everglades National Park. Farmland is recognized as the preferred neighbor to natural areas because of its minimal impervious areas, open green space and low population density. A strong agricultural economy in the Lower East Coast Region based on profitable crop production is the best defense against conversion of agricultural land to urban land.

The major estuaries in the Lower East Coast Region are Lake Worth Lagoon in Palm Beach County, West Lake in Broward County and Biscayne Bay in Miami-Dade County. Lake Worth Lagoon was predominantly a freshwater system as recent as 100 years ago but was converted into a marine system with construction of permanent inlets to the ocean. West Lake is 1,400 acres of

coastal wetland and mangroves in Hollywood along the Intracoastal Waterway. Biscayne Bay is a subtropical lagoon about 40 miles long that extends the length of Miami-Dade County.

Prior to urban development, freshwater discharge to Biscayne Bay consisted of flows through natural drainageways, overland flow and groundwater discharge from the Biscayne aquifer. However, the flow has changed from short bursts of rainy season flow through low drainageways, to regulated releases through drainage canals and decreased periods of groundwater discharge (SFWMD, 1995). The construction of the canal system lowered the regional water table and subsequently reduced the amount of groundwater flow into the Bay. Groundwater discharge into Biscayne Bay is believed to occur through both seepage and flow through subsurface leakage channels. A zone of seepage occurs around the perimeter of the Bay where the water table elevation is higher than sea level. Subsurface flow occurs through natural leakage channels in the rock formations. Prior to the construction of drainage canals, springs flowed along the shore and emanated from the bottom of the bay. However, present day rates of groundwater discharge into the Bay are insufficient to produce such flowing springs (SFWMD, 1995).

Surface water flows into Biscayne Bay and Lake Worth Lagoon are primarily controlled by the system of canals, levees and control structures built as part of the Central and South Florida Flood Control Project. Biscayne Bay receives freshwater surface flows from 17 surface water basins through 12 major coastal structures (SFWMD, 1995). Lake Worth Lagoon's freshwater input is principally from the C-51 Canal. The mechanism of surface water flow into Biscayne Bay and Lake Worth Lagoon are short intense pulses of freshwater discharged at discrete locations. This flow has replaced the historic sheetflow through the wetlands adjacent to the Bay that existed before development of the canal system. Dry season flows into these water bodies are much lower than predrainage levels because most of the discharge into the Bay is from storm water releases from the canals. The canal discharge can bring sediments, heavy metals, pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, nutrients and low salinity plumes, which can all adversely affect the biota (SFWMD, 1995).

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - WATER QUALITY - WATER PRESERVE AREAS, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY

The Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Act (Ch. 373.451-373.459, F.S.), which was passed by the Florida Legislature in 1987 and amended in 1991 and 2003, mandated the preparation and implementation of a SWIM plan for Biscayne Bay. The South Florida Water Management District prepared and adopted the initial SWIM Plan for Biscayne Bay in 1988 and modified the Plan in 1989 and 1995. This Plan provides solutions and proposed projects that are consistent with the directives and intent of this legislation to prevent further decline in the quality of the Biscayne Bay resource. The Plan included numerous water quality improvement related strategies and projects to reduce pollutant loading in Biscayne Bay and its tributaries. Many of the projects that have been or are in the process of being implemented are anticipated to beneficially affect the future water quality conditions of the Bay.

The Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative was created by the 1999 Florida Legislature to survey the status of Biscayne Bay's resources and their management, and to produce a final report of findings and recommendations which was presented to the Florida Legislature in early 2001. One of

those recommendations resulted in the creation of the Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team (BBRRCT) which is a part of the Working Group of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. The BBRRCT identifies priority issues relating to Biscayne Bay as well as goals and performance measures related to those priority issues. The BBRRCT recommends the implementation of specific projects that address these priority issues and fulfill the recommendations of the Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative. All work done by the BBRRCT is consistent with the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve Act. As with the Biscayne Bay SWIM Plan, many of the projects identified by the BBRRCT are anticipated to beneficially affect the water quality conditions of Biscayne Bay and its tributaries.

In addition to the efforts in Biscayne Bay, the Lake Worth Lagoon Management Plan will also result in water quality improvement projects being implemented in the Lower East Coast area. Although implementation of these water quality improvement activities will result in beneficial effects to the Lower East Coast water bodies, the currently funded activities are not anticipated to be enough to improve the net future condition of these water bodies in this region due to the dramatic additional urban development, and associated additional pollutant loads, projected to occur in this region.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - PROJECTS

C-51 Canal

The current Design Memorandum was completed in February 1998 and submitted for review and approval and contains the same National Economic Development plan as the June 1992 Detailed Design Memorandum but references an “authorized” plan, which includes the replacement of the 2.5 square mile detention area with Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) 1E from the Everglades Construction Project (ECP). The “authorized” plan is also a product of the Technical Mediated Plan, which has been agreed to by the United States Department of Justice, United States Department of Interior (USDOI), United States Department of Army, the state of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District). The state of Florida's Everglades Forever Act is based, in part, on the Technical Mediated Plan. The current “authorized” plan was authorized by the Water Resources and Development Act of 1996. The Act included language for the Western C-51 Project that additional work, as described in the ECP, shall be accomplished at full federal cost.

The authorized plan is recommended in the C-51 Design Memorandum and has many of the same physical features proposed in the 1992 Detailed Design Memorandum (described below). The project will provide 10-year flood protection for the western basin of C-51. The major physical difference between the 1992 Detailed Design Memorandum National Economic Development plan and the authorized plan is the replacement of the 1,600 acre detention area with the 5,350 acre “locally preferred” STA 1 East. The most significant modification will be the reduction of discharges to Lake Worth, with C-51 West Basin runoff directed instead to WCA-1 (Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge). Runoff from the C-51 West Basin will pass through STA 1 East for water quality improvement prior to its discharge to WCA-1. In addition to the flood damage reduction benefits provided by the 1992 plan, the authorized plan would provide water quality

improvement, reduction of damaging freshwater discharges to Lake Worth, and increased water supply for the Everglades and other users.

Miami-Dade County Lake Belt Area

This component assumes that the conditions caused by the currently permitted mining exist and that the affects of any future mining are fully mitigated by the mining industry.

C-111 Project

Plan 6A, recommended in the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) General Reevaluation Report (dated May 1994), will create the operational capability and flexibility to provide restoration of the ecological integrity of Taylor Slough and the eastern panhandle areas of the Everglades and maintain flood protection to the agricultural interests adjacent to C-111.

In the future without plan condition, C-111 Plan 6A will protect the natural values of a portion of Everglades National Park, and will maintain flood damage prevention within the C-111 Basin, east of L-31N and C-111. The project, which consists of both structural and nonstructural modifications to the existing project works within the C-111 Basin, will restore the hydrology in 128 square miles of Taylor Slough and its headwaters in the Rocky Glades. In addition, the hydroperiod and depths in 1,027 square miles of Shark River Slough are beneficially impacted by the higher stages in the Rocky Glades, resulting in a net increase in water volume within Shark River Slough. The project will provide adequate operational flexibility to incorporate management strategies that will evolve as a result of continued monitoring and studies.

Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park

The Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park Project was on hold until February 2003, pending the resolution of litigation involving the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' authority to implement the selected plan for the 8.5 Square Mile Area.

The Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park Project was authorized by the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act (Public Law 10229). The purpose of the project is to provide for structural modifications to the C&SF Project to enable the restoration of more natural water flows to Shark River Slough in Everglades National Park. The project is being implemented by the USACE in conjunction with the acquisition of about 107,600 acres of land by the USDOJ. Land acquisition for the levee, canal, and pump station for the flood mitigation system in the 8.5 Square Mile Area is underway.

In the future without plan condition, the Modified Water Deliveries Project will provide more natural flows to Shark River Slough in Everglades National Park. Water flows will be spread across a broader section of Shark River Slough to include the east Everglades between L-67 Extension and L-31N.

The addition of water control structures and culverts will help to reestablish the natural distribution of water from WCA-3A into WCA-3B. Outlets from WCA-3B (S- 355A & B) will be

constructed to discharge into Northeast Shark River Slough. An existing levee and canal (L-67 Extension) along the eastern edge of the existing Everglades National Park boundary will also be removed. Additional flood protection will be provided to a Miccosukee Indian to avoid periodic flooding that would otherwise be caused by the project.

In order to prevent adverse flood impacts to the 8.5 Square Mile Area, the authorized project includes the construction of a seepage levee and canal around the western and northern edges of the area and a pump station (S-357) to remove excess seepage water. These project features are designed to maintain the existing level of flood protection in the residential area after the Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park project returns water levels in Northeast Shark Slough to higher levels. A second pump station (S-356) will be constructed to pump excess seepage water from the L-31N Borrow Canal and residential area into the L-29 Borrow Canal. This water will then flow through culverts under US Highway 41 into Northeast Shark River Slough. A locally preferred option that would modify the project features in the 8.5 Square Mile Area is currently under consideration.

The structural modifications were designed to provide for maximum operational flexibility so that as more is learned through the continued iterative testing program, the operation of the project can be adjusted accordingly.

East Cape and Homestead Canals

The East Cape and Homestead canals, located within Everglades National Park, were constructed by local interests in the early 1900s to assist in the drainage of the Everglades prior to authorization of the park in 1936. After the Everglades National Park was established, the canals were plugged to prevent over drainage of upstream freshwater systems and saltwater intrusion during high tides in the dry season. The passage of Hurricane Andrew resulted in extensive damage to both plugs. The project repaired the plugs in August 1997.

Lower East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan

The Lower East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan (LEC Plan) was adopted by the SFWMD Governing Board in May 2000. It provides a blueprint to help meet South Florida's water resource needs through the year 2020 when south Florida's population is projected to increase from five to seven million residents.

The analyses conducted during the Lower East Coast regional water supply planning process demonstrated the need for increased storage capabilities throughout the system to help meet the increasing agricultural, environmental and urban demands through 2020. The LEC Plan identified water resources and water supply development projects, both structural and nonstructural, to help meet the growing needs of the region. The LEC Plan also recommended major changes to the District's consumptive use permitting rules.

Northeastern Broward Secondary Canal Recharge Network

This component includes pump stations and structures that would maintain higher levels in secondary canals in eastern Broward County between the Hillsboro and the North New River canals during the dry season. The control of seasonally higher canal elevations along the coast could help recharge the aquifers being used by local public water supply wellfields, and further reduce saline encroachment into the coastal freshwater aquifers. The selected canals are located where recharge from the canals would help to hold back the saltwater front and protect the production capability of wellfields to the east.

Miami-Dade County Utility Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)

This component includes ASR wells and related facilities that would be installed associated with wellfields of the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Authority Department. These facilities would be operated to store water in the Floridan aquifer in the wet season and recover this water in the dry season.

Selected Elements of L-8 Project

The goal of the selected elements of the L-8 project is to redirect runoff from the southern L-8 Basin away from WCA-1 and the C-51 Canal to the West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area and the Loxahatchee Slough via the M Canal and the C-18 Canal. Subsequently, this water may be used to meet urban water supply demands for West Palm Beach, to meet environmental water demands of the West Palm Beach Catchment Area and Loxahatchee Slough, and may provide recharge for the Jupiter and Seacoast Utilities Authority wellfields. In addition, this project would be expected to reduce the incident and volume of harmful freshwater releases into Lake Worth Lagoon via the C-51 Canal. The project includes: an improved structural connection from the West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area to the Loxahatchee Slough ASR wells at the West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area or the Indian Trails Improvement District impoundment and a coastal recharge delivery system.

Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs)

This component involves operational adjustments associated with the establishment of minimum flows and levels (MFLs) for the Biscayne aquifer and the Everglades. Minimum levels for the Biscayne aquifer involves maintaining water levels in coastal canals to prevent saltwater intrusion. MFLs for the Everglades focuses on preventing hydric soils (peat and marl) from experiencing significant harm. Additionally, MFLs for Biscayne Bay are to identify the point at which future withdrawals will cause significant harm to the Bay.

FUTURE WITHOUT PLAN CONDITION - PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS - CRITICAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

C-4 Water Control Structure

This project involves construction of a gated control structure (S-380) in the C-4 canal at the congruence with the Dade-Broward Levee. A large volume of seepage is lost from WCA-3B to the coast because the existing water management system cannot raise surface and groundwater levels high enough to prevent seepage. Construction of a gated control structure with five 72-inch diameter culverts with remotely operated slide gates will increase aquifer recharge and surface and subsurface storage of water to reduce seepage, as well as enhance habitat for plants and animals. The total cost is estimated at \$1.3 million according to the project cooperation agreement entered into by the SFWMD and the USACE on January 7, 2000. More information is available regarding this critical project at www.saj.usace.army.mil/projects/index.html.

Western C-11 Water Quality Improvement

The purpose of this project is to improve the quality and timing of storm water discharges from the Western C-11 Basin to the Everglades Protection Area. The S-9 Pump Station currently pumps urban and agricultural storm water runoff from the Western C-11 Basin directly into WCA-3A. This project will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 involves installation of four new seepage return pumps adjacent to the S-9 Pump Station. These seepage return pumps include two 75-cfs electric pumps and two 175-cfs diesel pumps. Phase 1 was completed in September 2002 and fully operational as of April 2003. Phase 2 will involve construction of a new divide structure in the C-11 canal, approximately 0.5 miles east of US Highway 27. The divide structure will be a bladder-type concrete spillway with a discharge capacity of 2,880 cfs. The construction contract was awarded in September 2003 with completion of construction targeted for December 2004. During non-flood conditions, the new structure is intended to separate seepage from storm water runoff, allowing return of relatively clean seepage waters to WCA-3A using the new seepage return pumps. Additional information may be obtained from the website: www.saj.usace.army.mil/projects/index.html.

WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

For planning purposes, the Lower East Coast consists of Water Preserve Areas, North Palm Beach County and Miami-Dade County Regions, including Biscayne Bay and Lake Worth Lagoon. According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) 1998 303(d) list, approximately 42 water body segments (both fresh and marine water bodies) within the Lower East Coast are use-impaired. Pollutants/water quality constituents causing impairment include low levels of dissolved oxygen (DO), high levels of mercury (based on fish consumption advisories) and other trace metals, and high levels of coliform bacteria, total suspended solids (TSS), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and un-ionized ammonia.

Four of the main C&SF Project canals delivering flows from Lake Okeechobee and the WCAs (the West Palm Beach, Hillsboro, New River and Miami canals) traverse the Lower East

Coast. In addition to conveying Lake Okeechobee and WCA flows, the C&SF Project canals and a network of connecting secondary and tertiary canals provide drainage in the Lower East Coast, which conveys storm water runoff and attendant pollution loads to estuarine waters. Management of storm water runoff and flooding via the existing canal system has been implicated as the chief cause of water quality degradation in the region, particularly in the northern portion of Biscayne Bay.

Improving water quality in the Lower East Coast to meet water quality standards in all impaired water bodies will likely be difficult, considering the extent of urban development, minimal or nonexistent water quality treatment for nonpoint source runoff, and other direct (point source) and indirect discharges adversely affecting water quality in the Lower East Coast. Water quality conditions are expected to worsen in the Lower East Coast (central and southern Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties) by 2050 compared to current conditions. FDEP's 1996 Section 305(b) report to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) describing water quality conditions in the region indicates that most of the region exhibits "fair" or "good" water quality. The report goes on to state that most pollution (in the region) comes from storm water, although bacteriological contamination from wastewater discharges and septic tanks is also a significant problem, particularly in the Miami River, downstream in Biscayne Bay, and urban areas west of the intracoastal waterway in Broward County and north of the New River. Water quality conditions in receiving water bodies in 2050 are expected to be further degraded, due to the developed condition of the watershed and the continued accumulation of pollutants in sediments in receiving water bodies.

Nearly all of this heavily urbanized watershed drains to estuarine waters. Net pollution loads, especially from nonpoint sources, to receiving waters in the Lower East Coast are expected to increase as a result of projected population increases. The expected increase in net pollution loads may not be directly proportional to population growth. New growth and urban/suburban development in the Lower East Coast must comply with water quality treatment requirements for nonpoint source runoff, whereas much of the existing development in the Lower East Coast does not include facilities for treatment of nonpoint pollution sources. Nevertheless, the projected addition of approximately 2.7 million people to the region is expected to cause water quality conditions to be further degraded, especially in those basins which are already stressed by existing pollution loads.

In Palm Beach County, the Lake Worth Lagoon Estuary is the receiving water body for most of that urban watershed. There are approximately eight use-impaired water bodies in Palm Beach County on the FDEP 1998 303(d) list. Listed water body segments include coastal canals and freshwater areas further inland. Water quality conditions are expected to improve (in terms of estuarine salinity targets) as a result of the C-51 (STA 1 East) Project, which will divert freshwater discharges to Lake Worth Lagoon to a treatment area prior to discharge to WCA-1. However, net nonpoint source pollution loads to Lake Worth Lagoon may increase commensurate with increases in population and development.

Although there are no extensive estuarine water bodies in Broward County, remaining mangroves in southern Broward County canals and along the Intracoastal Waterway provide similar habitat. There are approximately 21 303(d)-listed use-impaired water body segments in Broward County. These water body segments are primarily coastal canals providing drainage. Due to the extent of existing urban development in the watersheds of those canals, it is not likely that there will be a significant increase in future nonpoint source pollution loads into these water bodies. However,

it is also unlikely that basin-wide storm water best management practices (BMPs), e.g., retention/detention facilities, and filtration, can be implemented effectively in heavily urbanized watersheds, due to the lack of available land for such facilities. Future basin planning efforts during TMDL development and implementation may result in more effective controls of other direct (point source) and indirect discharges of pollutants (e.g., car washes and other industrial facilities). At best, the long-term prognosis for improving all use-impaired water bodies in coastal areas of Broward County is uncertain.

In Miami-Dade County, approximately 13 water body segments were identified as use-impaired on the FDEP's 1998 303(d) list. Most are coastal canals providing drainage of runoff to Biscayne Bay. Biscayne Bay is the largest estuarine water body in the Lower East Coast, and is the receiving water body for most of the developed area of Miami-Dade County. Most of Biscayne National Park is located within the central and southern portion of the Biscayne Bay Estuary. As with some of the Broward County canals, controlling nonpoint sources of runoff in heavily urbanized areas in Miami will be difficult, due to the lack of available land for basinwide BMPs. Some incremental improvement of nonpoint source pollution loads may be realized through the basin management plans to be developed by the FDEP. Point sources and other direct discharges of pollutants to Biscayne Bay and tributary canals should be significantly improved if basin management plans are fully implemented. However, overall, it is not expected that water quality in coastal canals draining to Biscayne Bay will be improved to the point that all surface water quality standards will be achieved. Furthermore, the water quality benefits achieved in the short term as a result of the current Biscayne Bay SWIM Plan and Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative Implementation projects may be offset in the long term by the increases in nonpoint source pollution loads associated with projected population increases.

LAND USE - WATER PRESERVE AREAS, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY

Agriculture

Broward and Miami-Dade counties are included in this area. Although Palm Beach County is also a part of this area physiographically, agriculture issues for Palm Beach County were addressed within the Everglades Agriculture Area Region (**Chapter 7**). More than 100,000 acres are farmed in Broward and Miami-Dade counties (UFBEBR, 1995), and are characterized by small farms averaging less than 50 acres, with very high productivity of more than \$3,500 per acre (UFBEBR, 1995). A variety of crops are produced including vegetables, tropical fruits and nursery plants. Hurricane Andrew, which struck southern Miami-Dade County in 1992, caused significant damage to agricultural areas. Many fruit tree orchards were damaged or destroyed. Statistics from 1996 indicate that avocado production had recovered, but mango and lime orchards had not yet recovered from the hurricane damage (FASS, 1997b). Total acres of tropical fruit production in Miami-Dade County remain approximately 7,000 less than pre-hurricane levels (FASS, 1996e). Foliage plant production is also a major business in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. More than 120 million square feet were devoted to the foliage crop in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties in 1996 (FASS, 1997a).

Agricultural production and services employ approximately 18,000 people in this region representing a \$23 million payroll (UFBEBR, 1995). The total market value of agricultural products from this region is almost \$400 million (UFBEBR, 1995). Miami- Dade County ranks second in the state for total market value of agricultural products (UFBEBR, 1995).

Approximately half of the acreage farmed in the three region area is irrigated (UFBEBR, 1995). This region is highly dependent on the system of canals, levees and other structures for flood control in the wet season and water supply in the dry season. Providing adequate drainage and flood control to the south Miami-Dade County agricultural area is a serious challenge because the farmland is directly adjacent to Everglades National Park. Evidence suggests that efforts to provide flood control to agriculture have resulted in over-drying the eastern portions of Everglades National Park adversely affecting Park ecology. Agricultural land does, however, provide a buffer between urbanization and Everglades National Park. Farmland is recognized as the preferred neighbor to natural areas because of its minimal impervious areas, open green space and low population density. A strong agricultural economy in the Lower East Coast Region based on profitable crop production is the best defense against conversion of agricultural land to urban land.

Urban

The Lower East Coast supports the densest population in the state of Florida. Population in the Lower East Coast is expected to increase by 35 percent, from 4,518,401 in 1995 to 6,825,600 (BEBR, 2002) in 2020. Land use in the Lower East Coast is primarily related to urban activities and the infrastructure, such as transportation and utilities, needed to support this large number of people. Urban demands are expected to increase by 39 percent by 2020. If however, the Lower East Coast experiences a one in-10 year drought during the planning period, then the projected urban and agricultural demand will increase about 43 percent.

South Miami-Dade County is defined as the area south of SW 184th St. (Eureka Drive). US Highway 1 bisects the area. West of US 1, land uses are primarily estate and low-density residential uses within the Urban Development Boundary (UDB). Other higher density residential uses, business/office and industrial uses are found in Homestead and Florida City. The Redlands and other agricultural areas are west across the UDB and make up most of the approximately 55,000 acres of agricultural lands that remain in south Miami-Dade County. The Urban Expansion Area designation identifies agricultural lands in south Miami-Dade County as the next place for development.

Miami-Dade and Broward counties have the most pronounced sprawl patterns. The South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC) describes the change:

Essentially rural areas in the western extremes of Broward and Miami-Dade counties have given way to sprawling suburban residential development and shopping centers. Indeed, these have been an important component of the economic growth that has taken place in the region. During the process, the once significant rural population has virtually disappeared, resulting in the emergence of a distinctly urban character to the region. Miami-Dade County was already 94 percent urban in 1950, and 77 percent of Broward County's population lived in urban areas. By 1980, both counties were 99 percent urban. Only in Monroe County did a significant portion of the population still live outside of urban areas in 1990 (27 percent), consistent with the special characteristics of that county's political geography (SFRPC, 1996).

Palm Beach County is experiencing a similar change. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) reports that while the coastal area of Palm Beach County from Riviera Beach to Boca Raton, is heavily urbanized, much of the recent population growth has occurred in the western unincorporated areas (TCRPC, 1996). This sprawling urbanization tended to push agricultural land uses off of prime farmlands into the less suitable wetlands fringing the coastal ridge. As the development continues to expand it is expected that it will consume the remaining agricultural lands (both historic and recent) and eventually make its way into the remaining unprotected wetlands of the counties. The SFRPC explains that the region, in the response to the pressure of continued population growth, is likely to yield to the pressure to continue to urbanize.

Additional Lower East Coast urban-related land uses include the Florida Power and Light nuclear power plant at Turkey Point, landfills, rock mining, the former Homestead Air Force Base site, and a number of marinas scattered throughout Biscayne Bay and Lake Worth Lagoon.

Increased Pressure on Open Land

As development continues the availability of developable land decreases putting pressure on the unprotected wetlands and agricultural lands. There is a fear that agriculture lands will come under increased pressure as lands are converted into subdivisions or set aside for environmental protection. South Miami-Dade County typifies this trend. As people continue to move into the county pushing the north and central regions to capacity, the remaining undeveloped areas in south Miami-Dade County become the easiest option for future growth. The 80,000 acres of agricultural lands in the Redland Region and other parts of unincorporated Miami-Dade County are increasingly under development pressure. In the 1995 Evaluation and Appraisal Report Miami-Dade included a recommendation that a Farmland Retention Study be conducted, noting that:

By [the Evaluation and Appraisal Report for 2000] the currently planned Urban Development Boundary will be substantially built out and the County will be facing the prospect of having to plan for the urbanization of an additional 20 square miles of land, if we continue the past trend of low-density development.

There are several other efforts to halt these land conversion and development trends including the following: Eastward Ho!, Brownfields and the South Miami-Dade U.S. 1 Corridor Project.

ELIGIBLE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN (CERP) PROJECTS

North Palm Beach County Project - Part 1

This project consists of six separable elements including: Pal-Mar and J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area Hydropattern Restoration, L-8 Basin Modifications, C-51 and Southern L-8 Reservoir, Lake Worth Lagoon Restoration, C-17 Pumping and Treatment and C-51 Pumping and Treatment. These separable elements have been combined into a single project to address the interdependencies and trade-offs between the different elements. This method will provide a more efficient and effective design of the overall project. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Internal Canal Structures

This project includes two water control structures in the northern ends of the perimeter canals encircling the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (Water Conservation Area 1) located in Palm Beach County.

The purpose of this project is to improve the timing and location of water depths within the Refuge. It is assumed that these structures will remain closed except to pass Stormwater Treatment Area 1 East and Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West outflows and water supply deliveries to the coastal canals. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Acme Basin B Discharge

This environmental restoration project provides a source of treated water for the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Palm Beach County. The current alternatives being considered include variations of discharging water through Acme Basin A to the C-51 Canal and thence to Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) -1E for treatment. An approximate area of 410 acres may be added for additional treatment, storm water attenuation or increase in the spatial extent of wetlands. Selection of the recommended alternative is anticipated along with the completion of the Project Implementation Report in March 2004. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Strazzulla Wetlands

This project includes relocation of a water control structure, the installation of a low berm along the eastern boundary to contain rainfall within the project and preclude the possibility of introducing stormwater runoff into the wetlands from the surrounding area and the acquisition of 3,335 acres located in Palm Beach County. The purpose of this separable element is to provide a hydrological and ecological connection to the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and expand the spatial extent of protected natural areas. This land will act as a buffer between higher water stages to the west and lands to the east that must be drained. The increase in spatial extent will provide vital habitat connectivity for species that require large unfragmented tracts of land for survival. The wetlands contains the only remaining cypress habitat in the eastern Everglades and one of the few remaining sawgrass marshes adjacent to the coastal ridge. This is a unique and endangered habitat that must be protected as the area provides an essential Everglades landscape heterogeneity function. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Palm Beach County Agricultural Reserve Reservoir - Part 1

This project includes an above ground reservoir with a total storage capacity of approximately 9,000 acre-feet located in the western portion of the Palm Beach County Agricultural Reserve. The purpose of this project is to supplement regional water supply deliveries for central and southern Palm Beach County by capturing and storing excess water currently discharged to the Lake Worth Lagoon. These supplemental deliveries will reduce demands on Lake Okeechobee and the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge area. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Site 1 Impoundment

This project includes an above ground reservoir with an inflow pump station for a total storage capacity of approximately 13,000 acre-feet located in the Hillsboro Canal Basin in southern Palm Beach County. This environmental restoration project is designed to retain pristine water in the natural system by reducing seepage and capturing and storing water currently discharged to tide via the Hillsboro Canal. The captured water will supplement regional water supply deliveries to the Hillsboro Canal during dry periods thereby reducing demands on Lake Okeechobee and the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Water from the Hillsboro Canal will be pumped into the reservoir during the wet season or periods when excess water is available and released back to the canal to help maintain stages during the dry-season. The project will stabilize the salt water/fresh water interface, replenish groundwater levels and wellfields, and incidentally provide some additional flood protection. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Broward County WPA

The Broward County WPA project is comprised of three Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan components. The components are the C-11 Impoundment and Diversion Canal, the C-9 Impoundment and the Water Conservation Area 3A/3B Levee Seepage Management. This multi-purpose project is designed to retain more water in the natural system by controlling seepage of the pristine natural system water, capture, store and provide some treatment of the water currently discharged to tide, supplement regional water supply deliveries and increase the spatial extent of wetlands. The C-11 Impoundment is a 1500-acre above ground reservoir and the C-9 Impoundment is a 1700-acre above ground reservoir. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Eastern C-4 Structure

This project consists of a single 600 cubic feet per second bladder-type water control structure located just east of the confluence of the C-4 and C-2 Canals in Miami-Dade County. The purpose of this project is to divert dry season water supply deliveries to the C-2 Canal for wellfield and ground water recharge. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

WPA Conveyance

This project is comprised of parts of two CERP components which are the e Dade Broward Levee and Canal and a part of the North Lake Belt Storage Area known as the Turnpike Deliveries. The purpose of this project is to reduce seepage to the east from the Pennsuco wetlands and southern WCA 3B, enhance hydroperiods in the Pennsuco Wetlands, provide recharge to the Miami-Dade County's Northwest Wellfield and convey regional water supply deliveries to the South Dade Conveyance System. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Divert WCA 2B Flows to Everglades National Park

This project consists of two components: The first is WCA 2B Flows to Central Lake Belt Storage Area and the second is that part of the Central Lake Belt Storage Area known as the L-30 Borrow Canal conveyance upgrade. The purpose of the project is to convey excess natural system water in Water Conservation Area 2B and seepage from Water Conservation Areas 3A and 3B through a conveyance system that will include no mixing of stormwater runoff to the Central Lake Belt Storage Area and then Shark River Slough in Everglades National Park. The WCA 2B Flows component includes a pump station and essential water control structures to move water through the North New River Canal to the L-37 and L-33 Borrow Canals to the L-30 Canal and into Shark River Slough and includes conveyance upgrade to the two borrow canals. The L-30 Borrow Canal is projected to convey, after improvements, flows ranging from 1400 to 2000 cubic feet per second. More information can be found at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Divert WCA 3 Flows to Central Lake Belt Storage Area

This component captures excess water in Water Conservation Area 3A and 3B to reduce above target stages in Water Conservation Area 3 when decompartmentalization is completed and diverts the water through a new water control structure (S-501) to Central Lake Belt Storage Area via the improved L-37 and L-33 Canals (C-500A and C-500B) addressed in WCA 2B Flows (above). More information can be found at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Broward County Secondary Canal System

This project includes a series of water control structures, pumps and canal improvements located in the C-9, C-12 and C-13 Canal Basins and east basin of the North New River Canal in central and southern Broward County. The purpose of this project is to reduce maintain canal stages in the secondary canal system, recharge wellfield and ground water levels and stabilize the saltwater/freshwater interface. Excess water in the basins will be pumped into the coastal canal systems to maintain canal stages at optimum levels. When basin water is not sufficient to maintain canal stages, the canals will be maintained from other construction projects, such as the Site1 Impoundment, the North Lake Belt Storage Area and then from the regional system. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Lake Belt In-Ground Reservoir Technology Pilot Project

Several projects recommend the use of areas where lime rock mining will have occurred. The initial design of these reservoirs includes subterranean seepage barriers around their perimeter in order to enable drawdown during dry periods, prevent seepage losses, and prevent water quality impacts due to transmissivity of the aquifer in these areas.

The pilot project is required to determine construction technologies, storage efficiencies, impacts on local hydrology, and water quality effects. Water quality assessments will include a determination as to whether the in-ground reservoirs and seepage barriers will allow for storage of untreated waters without concern for groundwater contamination. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Wastewater Reuse Technology Pilot Project

Currently, two CERP projects involve the advanced treatment of wastewater. This pilot project will address water quality issues associated with discharging reclaimed water into natural areas, such as the West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area, Biscayne National Park and the Bird Drive Basin, the project will also determine the level of superior treatment and the appropriate methodologies for that treatment. A series of studies will be conducted to help determine the level of treatment needed. CERP will also monitor an existing reuse site in West Palm Beach and apply the data to potential reuse sites in West Miami-Dade. The research associated with West Palm Beach and West Miami-Dade will be performed under Part 1 of the pilot project. Part 2 of the pilot project will involve construction at a pilot facility in South Miami-Dade. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands

This project includes pump stations, spreader swales, stormwater treatment areas, flowways, levees, culverts and backfilling canals located in southeast Miami-Dade County and covers 13,600 acres from the Deering Estate at C-100C, south to the Florida Power and Light Turkey Point power plant, generally along L-31E. The purpose of this project is to rehydrate wetlands and reduce point source discharge to Biscayne Bay. Through a spreader system, this project will replace lost overland flow and partially compensate for the reduction in groundwater seepage by redistributing available surface water entering the area from regional canals. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

Bird Drive Recharge Area

This project includes pumps, water control structures, canals and an above ground recharge area with a total storage capacity of approximately 9,300 acre-feet located in western Miami-Dade County. The purpose of this project is to increase the spatial extent of wetlands, specifically the Muhly Grass Prairie Area, reduce seepage from the Everglades National Park buffer area by increasing water table elevations east of Krome Avenue, recharge groundwater flows to the east and provide flood peak attenuation in the western C-4 Canal basin. A portion of the Dade-Broward Levee and Canal South Dade Conveyance System will pass through the northern and western boundaries of the Bird Drive Recharge Area. More detailed information is available at www.evergladesplan.org/.

OTHER ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Lower East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan

The LEC Plan identified water resources and water supply development projects, both structural and nonstructural, to meet the growing needs of the region. More detailed information is available at www.sfwmd.gov/org/wsd/wsp/lecwsp.htm/.

Biscayne Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan

The Biscayne Bay SWIM Plan provides solutions and proposed projects to prevent further decline in the quality of the Biscayne Bay resource. The Plan included numerous water quality improvement related strategies and projects to reduce pollutant loading in Biscayne Bay and its tributaries. This Plan identifies many projects that are anticipated to beneficially affect the future water quality conditions of the Bay that have not yet been funded or implemented. More detailed information is available at http://glacier.sfwmd.gov/org/wrp/wrp_ce/projects/bb/index.html.

Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative Implementation

The Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team (BBRRCT), which resulted from the Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative, identifies priority issues relating to Biscayne Bay as well as goals and performance measures related to those priority issues. The BBRRCT annually recommends the implementation of specific projects that address these priority issues and fulfill the recommendations of the Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative. As with the Biscayne Bay SWIM Plan, many of the projects identified by the BBRRCT are anticipated to beneficially affect the water quality conditions of Biscayne Bay and its tributaries. More detailed information is available at www.discoverbiscaynebay.org/index.asp

Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative

Since 1998, the Legislature has supported the restoration and enhancement of the LakeWorth Lagoon by appropriating a total of \$9,385,000 for the Lake Worth Lagoon Partnership Grant Program. This pass-through grant program, from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, to Palm Beach County, to local sponsors, funds construction projects to benefit the water quality and habitat in the lagoon. A total of 29 construction projects have been funded, 14 projects are complete or nearly complete and the remaining projects are in various stages of implementation. Local sponsors provide at least 50% of the total project cost in order to receive funding. The grant has also funded a limited amount of monitoring projects including seagrass mapping and monitoring, and the evaluation of muck sediments.

Much of the lagoon's natural habitat has been lost, or its quality diminished, due to years of environmentally degrading activities such as channel dredging, shoreline bulkhead construction and filling, causeway and bridge construction, docks and marinas, industrial waste discharge, sewage disposal, stormwater runoff, canal development, port and power plant construction.

Only 19% of the lagoon's shoreline remains fringed by mangroves and approximately 65% of the shoreline is bulk-headed. Many of the projects funded under the grant program will benefit the lagoon by restoring or creating habitat through construction of artificial reefs, environmental enhancement of areas impacted by dredged spoil material, and the installation of mangrove planters along hardened shorelines.

Since much of the development within the Lake Worth Lagoon watershed occurred prior to the advent of stormwater regulations, in many areas untreated stormwater (non-point source pollution) runs off directly into the lagoon, or one of its tributaries, adversely impacting water

quality. Stormwater projects constructed under the grant program are required to be installed in areas which have been previously developed and currently discharge untreated stormwater. These types of projects include wet and dry retention systems, pollution control devices, and swale construction which will, depending on the design, reduce the quantity and improve the quality of stormwater runoff. A marina sewage pump-out and a sewer rehabilitation project will also reduce non-point source pollution from boat holding tanks and septic tanks, respectively.

The following costs are projected for the project:

- Total estimated project cost: \$34,000,000
- Total estimated matching funds from local sponsors: \$24,500,000
- Total grant funds: \$9,385,000

Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative

The Loxahatchee River is the southernmost tributary of the Indian River Lagoon and includes the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River, the first nationally designated Wild and Scenic River in Florida. The watershed covers over 277 square miles in southern Martin and northern Palm Beach Counties. The population is nearing 80,000 and most of those residents live in the coastal communities of Hobe Sound, Tequesta, Jupiter, Palm Beach Gardens and Juno Beach. About 10,000 people live in low-density inland communities such as Jupiter Farms and Caloosa that are not connected to public utilities and are prone to flooding.

The watershed is divided into seven sub-basins based on hydrology and land use. The seven sub-basins are as follows: Sub-basin 1 – Jonathan Dickinson State Park/Kitching Creek; Sub-basin 2 – Coastal; Sub-basin 3 – Estuary; Sub-basin 4 – C-18 Canal/Corbett; Sub-basin 5 – Cypress Creek/Palm Mar; Sub-basin 6 – Groves; Sub-basin 7 – Wild and Scenic/Jupiter Farms. Most of the urban and suburban development is concentrated along the beaches and around the banks of the estuary in Sub-basins 2 and 3, while large natural areas remain undeveloped in Sub-basins 1, 4 and 5. Agriculture is found mostly in Sub-basin 6, with scattered agricultural activity in Sub-basins 1, 5 and 7.

Water quantity and quality influence the aquatic and wetland ecosystems in the watershed. Water is a limited resource necessary, not only for public use, but to conserve natural areas and protect wetlands. Fresh water that historically reached the Wild and Scenic River began being diverted at the turn of the century to provide drinking water to Palm Beach. In the 1950s, the headwaters of the river were drained for agriculture and other urban land uses. Today, even more water is being diverted for human consumption. Over the past 50 years, four river miles of cypress swamp have been replaced by mangroves due to saltwater intrusion resulting from diminished freshwater flow. Wetlands have been intentionally drained and/or filled, or simply degraded through water diversion and a lowered water table. Changes in hydrology have allowed invasive exotic plants to move into areas that were once high quality wetlands.

Water quality is influenced by pollution entering waterways via point and non-point sources. Four of the waterways in the river system are impaired waters that do not meet their designated uses. They include Kitching Creek, the C-18 Canal and the Northwest and Southwest Forks of the

Loxahatchee River. These waterways are listed for problems such as high nutrient and fecal coliform concentrations and low dissolved oxygen. The majority of the water quality problems in the watershed are caused by non-point stormwater runoff. Changes in the landscape have diminished the land's ability to absorb rainwater and naturally cleanse runoff, causing more pollutant-laden runoff to enter the river and its tributaries. Additionally, older developments were designed to provide maximum drainage with little or no stormwater treatment prior to discharge into natural waterways.

The protection of the Loxahatchee River began in the 1970s. During the 1970s the river was the focus of USGS water quality studies. Concerned citizens successfully lobbied to have the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River receive the federal "wild and scenic" designation. As mandated by the State Wild and Scenic Loxahatchee River Designation and Preservation Act, the Loxahatchee River Management Coordinating Council (LRMCC) was formed in the 1980s. The LRMCC is composed of representatives from various local, state and federal agencies, elected officials, recreational users, local residents and agriculture. Their primary focus is protecting the Wild and Scenic Loxahatchee River corridor. The LRMCC membered agencies have succeeded in acquiring the designated river corridor and studying the impacts from non-point sources that influence the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. Those basins that contribute to this portion of the river system are characterized by low-density residential development with some agriculture and large tracts of undeveloped land.

The Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative is the outgrowth of a watershed management effort that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection spearheaded in 1996. The Loxahatchee River Watershed Management Planning Committee (LRWMPC) was formed to define and evaluate the status of the entire watershed and proposed actions that would improve and protect the natural resources within the watershed. In this way, it differs from the LRMCC which is focused only on the Northwest Fork of the river. Throughout this process, public input was collected at workshops and with surveys. The LRWMPC findings were published in the second draft of the Loxahatchee River Watershed Action Plan in October 1998. The action plan was presented to the public and elected officials at formal workshops and at smaller presentations to select audiences. Over the past few years, several of the proposed projects have been implemented. There remain several key projects that have not been implemented due to lack of resources and other regional priorities taking precedence. Urban stormwater improvements and the restoration of other tributaries and the estuarine portion of the river system are emphasized in the Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative. Urban residents and river users will be primary beneficiaries of our efforts to improve water quality.

Beginning in 2002, the Florida Legislature provided \$2,500,000 in funding to assist with four significant and beneficial water quality projects within the Loxahatchee River Basin. These projects included Jones Creek Restoration – Phase 1, Loxahatchee Slough Restoration – Phase 2, Jupiter Farms Water Quality Improvements and Jonathan Dickinson State Park Water Quality Improvements. All of these efforts are currently underway and scheduled for completion within the year.

Chapter 10

SAVE OUR RIVERS (SOR) PROJECTS

History

In 1981, the Florida Legislature created the Save Our Rivers (SOR) program for the water management districts to acquire environmentally sensitive land. The legislation produced Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, known as the Water Management Lands Trust Fund. The trust fund receives revenues from the documentary stamp tax, which the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers. The statute enables the water management districts to use the trust fund to acquire fee title or other interest in lands needed to manage, protect, and conserve the state's water resources. The act specifies an allocation formula for each district and the process for them to use the fund. Preservation 2000 (P-2000), enacted by the Legislature in 1990, also added land-acquisition funds to the Save Our Rivers program. P- 2000 created the Florida Preservation Trust Fund, which DEP also administers. Land acquisition with P-2000 money requires that projects meet criteria of both the P-2000 and the Save Our Rivers programs.

Florida Forever

During the 1999 session, the Florida Legislature created the Florida Forever program, which will replace Preservation 2000. Florida Forever will provide the primary funding source for land acquisition when P-2000 terminates. Until Preservation 2000 is concluded and all the funds have been expended or committed, the SOR program will continue to file its five-year plan of acquisition and land management activity by January 15 each year. The Save Our Rivers Land Acquisition & Management Plan provides the acquisition status for all projects and is available through the District's website, at the www.sfwmd.gov; select Major Projects; select SOR.

Acquisitions of lands for SOR projects will be accomplished in concert with other District initiatives under the Florida Forever Work Plan. Although the majority of Florida Forever expenditures will be used to purchase lands for water resource projects, such as reservoirs and stormwater treatment areas, the purchase and management of several SOR projects may be funded through Florida Forever if necessary.

ELIGIBLE SAVE OUR RIVERS (SOR) PROJECTS

CREW

Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) is located in Lee and Collier counties. The CREW lands surround the National Audubon Society's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, which is not included in the project boundary. The CREW lands include a variety of community types, including extensive cypress dominated dome and basin swamps in Lee County, and second growth

cypress/red maple swamps and large basin marshes in Collier County. CREW is jointly managed by the District and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The property is open for public use, but access is limited.

Frog Pond/L31N

The Frog Pond and L-31N Transition Lands cover approximately 10,450 acres and are located in south Dade County. The project includes 5,200 acres of agricultural lands known as the Frog Pond, which lie immediately north of the C-111 SOR project. It also contains 5,250 acres of "transitional lands," located east of C-111 and L-31N, north of the Frog Pond, and south of the 8.5 Square Mile Area.

Henscratch Ranch

The District is seeking to acquire a conservation easement over this 2,880-acre project located approximately 2.5 miles west of Lake June-in-Winter in Highlands County, and lying within the tributary watershed of Fisheating Creek. The site contains a variety of habitat community types, including pine flatwoods, scrub, baygall, prairie hammock, and seepage slope. A large stand of cutthroat grass, and endangered plant species, exists in a seep in Section 31. In addition, scrub jays and gopher tortoises are present. There is excellent habitat for sandhill cranes, swallowtail kites, and numerous wading birds. The natural communities are in good condition and fall within strategic habitat conservation areas for several species as identified in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's 1994 Closing the Gap Report.

Kissimmee River (Lower Basin)

The Lower Basin project includes those lands in the historic river floodplain and along the C-38 canal that are required for the Kissimmee River Restoration Project. Acquisition of these lands will allow the Corps of Engineers to back fill the canal and allow the river to return to its original course.

Kissimmee River (Kissimmee Chain of Lakes)

The District is buying lands along the shoreline of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes in order to raise the regulation water schedule in the lakes. Raising the lake schedules will allow the District to store more water in the lakes making it available for release to the Kissimmee River. The additional water is necessary in order to provide a year round flow when the river is restored.

Lake Marion Creek

Lake Marion Creek is in Polk County and flows from Lake Marion to Lake Hatchineha. Approximately 3,800 acres of the project are within the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Lake Marion Creek includes the 1,324-acre Horse Creek Scrub, designated for acquisition under the CARL program, and the Snell Creek Drainage Basin. Lands in this project have been acquired with assistance from Polk Co., Southwest Florida Water Management District, and U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service. Contained within the project are sand hills, pine flatwoods, and riverine swamp forests. The property is actively managed by the District and is available for public uses that include hiking, wilderness camping, and bicycling.

Pal-Mar (West Jupiter Wetlands)

In 1999 the District, CARL, and Palm Beach County purchased more than 15,000 acres in the project, bringing public ownership in the project to more than 18,000 acres. Pal-Mar contains the largest contiguous complex of high quality depression marshes and wet flatwoods in Martin and Palm Beach counties. Pal-Mar forms a key link in a 125,000-acre greenbelt that would extend from DuPuis Reserve, across the Corbett Wildlife Management Area, and connect with Jonathan Dickinson State Park. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is identified as the lead manager under the CARL plan. FWC will manage that portion of the project in Martin County and Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management will manage the 6,900 acres in Palm Beach County. The District's Pal-Mar Management Area off Indiantown Road is open for public use.

Reedy Creek

The Reedy Creek project is an extensive area of mixed hardwood/cypress swamp forest running for nearly 25 miles through western Osceola County, from the boundary of the Reedy Creek Improvement District to Cypress Lake. In most areas Reedy Creek Swamp has a floodplain that is several miles wide. Reedy Creek is the headwaters to the entire Kissimmee-Lake Okeechobee-Everglades Ecosystem, and it performs important water resource functions. Peak discharges from major storm events are modified and stored within the swamps to provide year-round base for downstream lakes and the Kissimmee River. There are numerous recreational opportunities on District-owned lands in Reedy Creek.

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Appendix A

WMD FLORIDA FOREVER GOALS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

INTRODUCTION

Included in this appendix are the Florida Forever Goals and Performance Measures that apply to both the FDEP and water management districts. When the goals and performance measures for the Florida Forever Program were developed in collaboration with the Florida Forever Advisory Council (FFAC), it was envisioned that these criteria would serve as a guide to land acquisition using Florida Forever funds. While the majority of funds expected to be received by the SFWMD will be used to acquire land for the CERP or the Kissimmee River Restoration projects, final foot prints are not always available at the time land acquisition occurs. This is especially true for CERP projects as most are in the early stages of their development, and exact locations will not be available for some time. The Florida Forever Goals & Performance Measures thus provide a guide for acquisition managers as they make purchases. As land managers identify tracts for specific projects they must, at the same time, identify which goals and performance measures the tracts satisfy. To make that process easier, Table A-1 identifies how each of the projects satisfies one or more Florida Forever Goals and Performance Measures. In this way, as land managers acquire land for specific projects, they can all be sure that land satisfies the requirements of the Florida Forever Program.

The Goals and Performance Measures are outlined as part of Section 259.105 of the Florida Statutes:

Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1. Section 259.105(4), F.S., is amended to provide new goals and performance measures for the Florida Forever programs of the DEP and WMDs. They include:

(Goal) (a) Enhance the coordination and completion of land acquisition projects, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired through the state's land acquisition programs that contribute to the completion of Florida Preservation 2000 projects or projects begun before Preservation 2000;
2. The number of acres protected through the use of alternatives to fee simple acquisition; or
3. The number of shared acquisition projects among Florida Forever funding partners and partners with other funding sources, including local governments and the federal government.

(Goal) (b) Increase the protection of Florida's biodiversity at the species, natural community, and landscape levels, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired of significant strategic habitat conservation areas;
2. The number of acres acquired of highest priority conservation areas for Florida's rarest species;
3. The number of acres acquired of significant landscapes, landscape linkages, and conservation corridors, giving priority to completing linkages.
4. The number of acres acquired of under-represented native ecosystems;
5. The number of landscape-sized protection areas of at least 50,000 acres that exhibit a mosaic of predominantly intact or restorable natural communities established through new acquisition projects, or augmentations to previous projects; or
6. The percentage increase in the number of occurrences of endangered species, threatened species, or species of special concern on publicly managed conservation areas.

(Goal) (c) Protect, restore, and maintain the quality and natural functions of land, water, and wetland systems of the state, as measured by:

1. The number of acres of publicly-owned land identified as needing restoration, acres under going restoration, and acres with restoration activities completed;
2. The percentage of water segments that fully meet, partially meet, or do not meet their designated uses as reported in the Department of Environmental Protection's State Water Quality Assessment 305(b) Report;
3. The percentage completion of targeted capital improvements in surface water improvement and management plans created under s. 373.453(2), F.S., regional or master stormwater management system plans, or other adopted restoration plans;
4. The number of acres acquired that protect natural floodplain functions;
5. The number of acres acquired that protect surface waters of the state;
6. The number of acres identified for acquisition to minimize damage from flooding and the percentage of those acres acquired;
7. The number of acres acquired that protect fragile coastal resources;
8. The number of acres of functional wetland systems protected.
9. The percentage of miles of critically eroding beaches contiguous with public lands that are restored or protected from further erosion;
10. The percentage of public lakes and rivers in which invasive, non-native aquatic plants are under maintenance control; or
11. The number of acres of public conservation lands in which upland invasive, exotic plants are under maintenance control.

(Goal) (d) Ensure that sufficient quantities of water are available to meet the current and future needs of natural systems and the citizens of the state, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired which provide retention and storage of surface water in naturally occurring storage areas, such as lakes and wetlands, consistent with the maintenance of water resources or water supplies and consistent with district water supply plans;
2. The quantity of water made available through the water resource development component of a district water supply plan for which a water management district is responsible; or
3. The number of acres acquired of groundwater recharge areas critical to springs, sinks, aquifers, other natural systems, or water supply.

(Goal) (e) Increase natural resource -based public recreational and educational opportunities, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired that are available for natural resource-based public recreation or education;
2. The miles of trails that are available for public recreation, giving priority to those that provide significant connections including those that will assist in completing the Florida National Scenic Trail; or
3. The number of new resource-based recreation facilities, by type, made available on public land.

(Goal) (f) Preserve significant archaeological or historic sites, as measured by:

1. The increase in the number of and percentage of historic and archaeological properties listed in the Florida Master Site File or National Register of Historic Places which are protected or preserved for public use; or
2. The increase in the number and percentage of historic and archaeological properties that are in state ownership.

(Goal) (g) Increase the amount of forestland available for sustainable management of natural resources, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired that are available for sustainable forest management; 2. The number of acres of state owned forestland managed for economic return in accordance with current best management practices;
3. The number of acres of forestland acquired that will serve to maintain natural groundwater recharge functions; or
4. The percentage and number of acres identified for restoration actually restored by reforestation.

(Goal) (h) Increase the amount of open space available in urban areas, as measured by:

1. The percentage of local governments that participate in land acquisition programs and acquire open space in urban cores; or
2. The percentage and number of acres of purchases of open space within urban service areas.

Table A-1. Florida Forever Goals by Project.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	ID	Project Name
3		2	2					38	Acme Basin B Discharge (OPE)
3		5	2					10	Big Cypress/L-28 Interceptor Modifications (CCC)
3			2					43	Bird Drive Recharge Area (U)
3		7,2	1					28	Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (FFF/ OPE)
3		2	1					49	Broward County WPA Conveyance (BB, XX,P1)
3			1					24	Broward County Secondary Canal System (CC) (P1)
3		2	2					45	Broward County WPA (C-9 STA and Impoundment) ®
3		2	2					45	Broward County WPA (C-11 Impoundment & WCA-3A&B Levee Seepage Management) (O,Q)
3	3	2	1					29	C-111 Spreader Canal (WW) (WW)
3			2,3					4	C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir and ASR Part 1 (DP1)
3			2					5	C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir and ASR Part 2 (DP2)
3		2						6	Caloosahatchee Backpumping with Stormwater Treatment (DDD)
3			2					33	Caloosahatchee River (C-43) Basin ASR Pilot Project (Pilot)
3			2,3					26	Central Lake Belt Storage Area Phase 2 (SP2)
3			1,2					23	Diverting WCA Flows to Central Lake Belt Storage Area
3			3					46	East Coast Canal Structures (C-4) (T)
3		2	2,3					8	Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir Phase I (GP1)
3		2	2,3					9	Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir Phase II (GP2)
3			2					27	Everglades National Park Seepage Management (V,FF)
3	3							31	Florida Keys Tidal Restoration (OPE/FK)
3	3							11	Flow to Northwest and Central WCA -3A (II)(RR)
3								93	Henderson Creek/Belle Meade Restoration (OPE)
								22	Hillsboro ASR Pilot (MP2)
3		1,2,4,5	1,2						Indian River Lagoon South, C-23/C-24/C-25/Northfork and Southfork Storage Reservoirs (UU), and C-44 Basin Storage Reservoir (B)
3			2					36	L-31 N Seepage Management Pilot Project (Pilot)
3			1,2					35	Lake Belt In-Ground Reservoir Technology - Pilot Project (Pilot)
3								2	Lake Istokpoga Regulation Schedule (OPE)
3			1,2					32	Lake Okeechobee Aquifer Storage and Recovery Pilot Project (Pilot)
3			2					3	Lake Okeechobee ASR (GG P1, GGP2,GGP3)
3								1	Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule
3		1,2,4,5	1,2					1	Lake Okeechobee Watershed (A) OPE (LOTSD) (W)
								94	Lakes Park Restoration (OPE)
3	3							14	Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Internal Canal Structures (KK)
		11						95	Melaleuca Eradication Project and other Exotic Plants
3								90	Miccosukee Tribe Water Management Plan (OPE)
3								15	Modified Holeyland Wildlife Management Area Operation Plan (DD)
3								16	Modified Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area Operation Plan (EE)
3			2,3					25	North Lake Belt Storage Area (Phase I & II) (XYP2)
3		1,2,4,5	1,3					17	North Palm Beach County Part 1 ((OPE)(PAL-Mar)(KP1,GGG) OPE (LWL) (X,Y)
3			2					18	North Palm Beach County Part 2 (LL,KP2)
3		2	2,3					20,21	Palm Beach County Agricultural Reserve Reservoir and ASR (WP1) (WP2)
3	1							39	Protect and Enhance Existing Wetland Systems along LNRW (Strazzulla Tract)
								92	Restoration of pineland and hardwood hammocks in C-111 Basin
3								96	Seminole Tribe Big Cypress Water Conservation Plan (OPE)
3			1,2					34	Site 1 Impoundment and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (Pilot)
3		2	2,3					40	Site 1 Impoundment and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (MP1)
3			2					98	South Miami-Dade County Reuse (BBB)
3		1,4,6	2					30	Southern Golden Gates Estates Restoration (OPE,SEGGHR)
3			2					37	Wastewater Reuse Technology Pilot Project (Pilot)
								48	WCA - 2B Flows to ENP (YY, SP1)
2								47	WCA - 3A & 3B Flows to CLBSA (ZZ)
3	3							12,13	WCA -3 Decompartmentalization and Sheetflow Enhancement (QQP1, SSP2, SSP1,AA) (QQP 2)
3			2					97	West Miami-Dade County Reuse (HHH)
								91	Winsburg Farms Wetland Restoration (OPE)

Appendix B

CURRENT FLORIDA FOREVER ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Florida Forever Work Plan is to present projects eligible for funding under the Florida Forever Act (Section 259.105, F.S.). The SFWMD 2004 Florida Forever Work Plan lists and describes 61 projects eligible for Florida Forever funding in the FY 2004-2008 period. The list of eligible projects includes CERP projects, SOR projects and water quality and supply initiatives, plans and studies.

Eligible Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Projects

Information for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects is included in the Project Management Plan for each project. From the main menu of the CD of this publication, you may access and view the approved version of the PMP or latest draft, available at the time of this publication. Current approved versions of all CERP PMPs, as well as in progress drafts are made available at www.evergladesplan.org/. The following list summarizes all eligible CERP projects:

Full Scale Projects

- Acme Basin B Discharge
- Big Cypress/L-28
- Bird Drive Recharge Area
- Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands
- Broward County Secondary Canal System
- Broward County Water Preserve Areas (WPA)
- C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir
- C-111 Spreader Canal
- Caloosahatchee Backpump
- Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir, Part 1
- Everglades National Park Seepage Management
- Florida Keys Tidal Restoration
- Flow to NW and Central WCA-3A
- Indian River Lagoon – South
- Lake Okeechobee Watershed
- Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Internal Canal Structures
- North Palm Beach County, Part 1
- Palm Beach County Agricultural Reserve Reservoir
- Site 1 Impoundment

Southern Golden Gates Estates Hydrologic Restoration
Strazzulla Wetlands
WCA 3A/3B Decompartmentalization and Sheetflow Enhancement, Part 1
WCA -2B Flows to Everglades National Park (ENP)
WPA Conveyance

Pilot Projects

Lake Okeechobee ASR Pilot
Lake Belt In-Ground Reservoir Pilot
Caloosahatchee ASR Pilot
Hillsboro ASR Pilot
L-31N Seepage Management Pilot
Wastewater Reuse Pilot

ELIGIBLE KISSIMMEE REGION PROJECTS

Information on the Kissimmee Region is included in Chapter 3 of this publication. The following list summarizes all eligible projects within the Region:

Kissimmee Basin Water Supply Plan Study
Kissimmee Basin Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) Study
Kissimmee Basin Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) Study
Kissimmee River Restoration Project Study
Kissimmee River Restoration Project
Upper Kissimmee Basin Long -Term Management Plan

ELIGIBLE SAVE OUR RIVERS PROJECTS

Descriptions of the eligible Save Our Rivers Projects are provided in Chapter 10. Additional information and project maps can be obtained from the *Save Our Rivers Land Acquisition & Management Plan*, available at www.sfwmd.gov; select Major Projects; select SOR.

Allapattah
CREW
Henscratch Ranch
Kissimmee River
Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (KCOL)
Lake Marion Creek

Pal-Mar

Reedy Creek

OTHER ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Belle Meade Acquisition Project

Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative Implementation

Biscayne Bay SWIM Plan

Caloosahatchee River Watershed Initiatives

Charlotte Harbor Watershed Initiatives

Estero Bay Watershed

Florida Bay Initiative

Four Corners

Indian River Lagoon (IRL) SWIM Plan

Lake Istokpoga

Lake Okeechobee SWIM Plan

Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative

Lower East Coast Water Supply Plan

Loxahatchee Preservation Initiative

Naples Bay Initiative

Okeechobee County

St. Lucie River Issue Team

Western Basins

Appendix C

LAND ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT

LAND ACQUISITION ACTIVITY REPORT

The South Florida Water Management District (District) land acquisition activity for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2002 through September 30, 2003, culminated with the purchase of 19,438 acres of land for a total cost of \$282.2 million. The acquisitions were funded by the State's Conservation and Recreation Lands Program (CARL), Florida Forever Program (SOETF), Save Our Rivers Program (LATF, WMLTF, P-2000); and other funds provided by the District, federal, state and local governments (DISTRICT, FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL GOV'T).

2003 Land Acquisition Highlights

- \$230 million used to purchase 13,268 acres for CERP Projects
- \$2.3 million used to acquire 18 acres for the Kissimmee River Restoration Project
- \$36.4 million used to purchase 3,547 acres for the Cypress Creek/Loxahatchee Project, SOR Project
- \$5.3 million used to acquire 124 acres for the C-4 Emergency Detention Project
- Local governments contribute \$11.5 million for acquisition of lands
- Federal government contributes \$5.8 million for acquisition of lands
- SFWMD funds \$45.3 million in land acquisitions
- \$184.8 million funded through the State's Florida Forever Program
- \$24.4 million funded through the State's Save Our Rivers Program

Lands acquired for CERP will be used to provide enhanced water quality, quantity, timing, and distribution. The 8,209 acres of land acquired for the Indian River Lagoon-South project will be used for the C-23 South Reservoir and the Allapattah Complex. The 1,220 acres acquired for the North Palm Beach County-Part 1 project will be used for the C-51 and L-8 Reservoir. The 290 acres acquired for the Broward County WPA project will be used for construction of the C-11 Impoundment, the C-9 Impoundment, and the WCA-3A/3B Levee Seepage Management area. Slightly more than 80 percent of the land required for the Broward County WPA project has been acquired. Additional acquisitions included 3,354 acres for the C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir – Part 1 and 31 acres for the Central Lake Belt Storage - Part 1 projects. The District continues its aggressive acquisition program in Miami-Dade County, acquiring 39 acres for the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands and 125 acres for the Bird Drive Recharge Area projects.

Several major acquisitions were accomplished in FY03 to increase District land holdings for CERP projects. The District completed acquisition of 7,260 remaining acres of Allapattah Ranch for the Indian River Lagoon-South project. Acres acquired for the North Palm Beach County-Part 1 project include the Palm Beach Aggregates, Inc. acquisition, a combined purchase of land and

construction over six years of the L-8 Reservoir. This design-build acquisition will allow the component to be placed into service six years before the original CERP implementation schedule.

The acres acquired in FY03 increased the total lands available for use by CERP projects to 193,658 acres, representing 48 percent of the estimated land needed for CERP projects.

In addition to acquiring lands, the District surplused a less-than-fee interest and granted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under the Wetlands Reserve Program a conservation easement over 15,369 acres of the Allapattah Ranch acquisition for \$23 million.

The land acquisitions and surplus accomplished by the District in the fiscal year were possible only thorough support and coordination with local, state, and federal governments; state and federal agencies; and in cooperation with the general public. The following table provides additional details regarding the lands acquired, by project and funding source.

Table C-1. Acquisition Activity Report (Fiscal Year 2003).

LAND RESOURCES DEPARTMENT										
Project Names	Parcel	Acres	Price	CARL	DISTRICT	FEDERAL	STATE	MITIGATION	P. 2000	LOCAL GOV'T
Big Cypress Basin	1	0.02	\$0							
Bird Drive Recharge Area										
Atoll Subdivision- Shallow Water	238	52.4	\$2,955,360		\$1,840,885		\$344,600			
Deep Water	10	70.84	\$2,066,500		\$739,500	\$1,327,000			\$769,875	
Shallow Water - Remaining	1	1.69	\$59,150						\$59,150	
Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands	2	39.05	\$2,631,250				\$2,400,000		\$231,250	
Broward County WPAs										
C-9 Impoundment	2	13.57	\$760,500						\$760,500	
C-11 Impoundment	5	151.39	\$14,862,950		\$1,390,650	\$3,800,000			\$9,692,300	
WCA 3A & 3B Levee Seepage Mgmt	16	125.46	\$4,288,550		\$3,239,000	\$276,000			\$773,550	
C-4 Emergency Detention	11	124.77	\$5,336,500				\$5,336,500			
C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir - Part 1	2	3,354.00	\$18,495,000		\$18,495,000					
C-111 Project										
L-31N	2	84.95	\$926,900		\$139,554				\$787,346	
Central Lake Belt Storage - Phase 1	4	31.12	\$956,600		\$850,000				\$108,600	
Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed										
Critical CREW	27	157.93	\$718,500	234,500.00		\$424,000			\$60,000	
Imperial Flowway	12	29.26	\$1,129,950	874,700.00				\$250,000		\$5,250
Cypress Creek/Loxahatchee	3	3,547.03	\$36,360,300						\$7,245,299	\$21,282,001
East Coast Buffer										
Pennsocco Wetlands	5	96.81	\$253,900					\$253,900		
Indian River Lagoon - South										
Allapattah Complex	1	7,259.97	\$21,061,453		\$18,557,435				\$2,504,018	\$21,061,453
C-23 South Reservoir	2	949.04	\$4,611,100						\$4,611,100	\$4,611,100
Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (KCCL)										
Lake Kissimmee	5	0.38	\$64,875							\$64,875
Tiger Lake	1	7.21	\$356,000						\$356,000	\$356,000
Kissimmee River (KR)										
Pool D	23	10.05	\$1,863,000						\$1,863,000	\$1,863,000
Lake Okeechobee Critical Project	3	4.96	\$10,200		\$10,200					\$10,200
Lake Okeechobee Wetlands Creation & Restoration	4	904.82	\$572,750				\$572,750			\$572,750
Mitigation	23	718.89	\$0							\$0
North Palm Beach - Part 1										
C-51 & L-8 Reservoir	2	1,219.58	\$157,000,000						\$157,000,000	\$157,000,000
Palmar	1	449.31	\$4,803,200						\$3,602,400	\$4,803,200
Shingle Creek	1	8.99								\$0
Water Conservation Area (WCA)	2	25.00	\$2,500						\$2,500	\$2,500
Totals*	409	19,438	\$282,168,988	\$1,109,200	\$45,262,224	\$5,827,000	\$8,653,850	\$503,900	\$3,068,846	\$11,537,818
										\$282,168,988

* During the reporting period \$24,501,374 has been encumbered during the reporting period to acquire an additional 5,053 acres of contracted acquisitions.

CARL - Conservation and Recreation Lands
DISTRICT - South Florida Water Management District
FEDERAL - Farm Bill, DOI, other federal funds
STATE - Special State Appropriations
MITIGATION - Mitigation funds used
P-2000 - Preservation 2000
SOETF - Save Our Everglades Trust Fund
LATF - Land Acquisition Trust Fund
WMLTF - Water Management Lands Trust Fund

LAND STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITY REPORT

Background & History

The Save Our Rivers (SOR) program began in 1981 with the legislative enactment of the Water Management Lands Trust Fund, Chapter 373.59, F.S., which enabled the five water management districts to buy lands needed for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources, and to make them available for appropriate public use. Since that time the South Florida Water Management District and its acquisition partners have purchased 310,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land (not including 800,000 acres in the three water conservation areas). Water resource projects, or those lands associated with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project consisting largely of impacted agricultural lands, have added another 145,000 acres.

Land Stewardship Program Operational Structure

The Land Stewardship Program is responsible for the planning and management of SOR lands and the implementation and administration of mitigation banks and regional offsite mitigation areas. The program has direct management responsibility for 177,000 acres in 13 projects, including two mitigation banks and several regional mitigation areas. For the 133,000 acres of non-District-managed lands, agreements or leases have been entered into with other agencies or local governments.

The major goals of the program are to restore the lands to their natural state and condition, manage them in an environmentally acceptable manner, and to provide public recreational opportunities that are compatible with natural resources protection. The program is implemented by a professional staff of 34 based in five service centers and at District headquarters in West Palm Beach.

Land Stewardship Program

Program Objectives

- Complete/update management plans for all projects
- Control invasive exotics
- Restore natural fire regime
- Restore native communities
- Employ multiple use practices
- Open lands for appropriate public use

Program Finances

Since its inception in the early 1980s, the Land Stewardship Program has been funded by a variety of sources. District ad valorem taxes have not been utilized for management since 1989. The principal source of management funding has been the Water Management Lands Trust Fund, which utilizes a portion of the state's documentary tax revenue to pay for land management activities. The fund reimburses actual expenditures based on quarterly invoices to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, which administers the fund. Appropriate expenditures are identified in the District's annual budget and approved by the Governing Board by a resolution to DEP. Since 2000, use of these funds has been limited to land management costs or to retire the District's land acquisition bonds.

Other funding sources include off-site mitigation, lease revenues, and grants. Off-site mitigation funds are collected as a result of conditions placed on Environmental Resource Management Permits approved by the Governing Board for authorized Regional Off-site Mitigation Areas (ROMAs). These funds must be spent strictly in accordance with the permit requirements for land acquisition, restoration, and general maintenance of lands within the ROMA. Land Stewardship Program staff obtained several grants to fund specific restoration projects on District lands. Low intensity cattle leases generate modest lease revenues, but may also require substantial in-kind services from the lessee. Additional in-kind services are provided by state and local governments, as well as numerous recreational groups and individual volunteers.

Operation and Maintenance of Land Resources

Chapter 373.59, the originating legislation of the Save Our Rivers program, states that lands acquired through this program "shall be managed and maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner and, to the extent practicable, in such a way as to restore and protect their natural state and condition." Major components of the Land Stewardship Program include:

Hydrologic/Habitat Restoration

A major thrust of the Land Stewardship Program is to protect and restore the flowways, watersheds, and wetlands, all of which are critical to the water resources of the District. Hydrologic restoration has been accomplished on numerous SOR projects, which range from installing earthen ditch plugs to rehydrate isolated wetlands, to constructing at-grade road crossings to restore sheetflow, to constructing levees and water control structures to reflood former Everglades marsh. Upland restoration efforts include timber thinning and chopping for the planned reintroduction of endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers, pine plantings to return pasture to pine flatwoods, and the creation of hardwood hammock and forested wetlands in the southern Everglades.

Exotic Plant Control

The District is committed to reducing the proliferation of exotic plant infestations and eradicating the problem where possible. Exotic control consists of the proper application of various environmentally acceptable chemical herbicides combined with mechanical techniques performed by staff or private contractors. Cooperators who manage District lands under contract or lease are

strongly encouraged to apply a similarly aggressive approach to exotic plant control. Exotic control is consistently the single largest item in the Land Stewardship Program annual budget.

Prescribed Burning

Periodic fire is a natural element of native Florida ecosystems. The District uses prescribed burning to reduce hazardous buildup of vegetative fuel loads, enhance wildlife habitat, and encourage restoration of native plant communities. The District burns its lands to simulate natural fire cycles which benefits native plant communities. Our goal is to conduct at least 50% of our prescribed burns during the growing season to mimic the natural occurrence of lightning season fires. The fire management program is based on ecological research and proven safety standards and requires trained and experienced staff familiar with the diverse and unique fire management needs of the Florida landscape.

Public Use & Environmental Education

The District encourages use of its lands for appropriate outdoor recreational activities. All SOR lands are available for public use, except in rare instances where there is no legal public access or where lease restrictions prohibit the public. The vast majority are managed as semi-wilderness areas, with very limited vehicular access other than off-road parking. Opportunities include hiking, primitive camping, canoeing, fishing, and horseback riding, with volunteers from various user groups maintaining the trails and wilderness campsites. Cooperative agreements with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) enable high quality, low impact hunting on nearly 160,000 acres. Acquisition and management partners from several counties have constructed environmental education centers, boardwalks, and interpretive trails, all at no cost to the District, that are used by thousands of school children and adults annually.

Mitigation

Under Chapter 373, (F.S.), the District is authorized to participate in and encourage the development of private and public mitigation banks and regional offsite mitigation areas. Furthermore, the state's mitigation banking rule, Chapter 62-342, encourages each water management district to establish two mitigation banks. The use of mitigation and mitigation banking offers opportunities to supplement funding of the District's land acquisition, restoration, and management programs.

SFWMD's mitigation bank sites include the Loxahatchee Mitigation Bank in Palm Beach County and the Corkscrew Regional Mitigation Bank in Lee County. The District is developing each bank in a public-private contractual agreement. Private bankers obtain permits, restore the land, reimburse the District for its land acquisition and staff costs, then generate a revenue stream for future projects. As of late 2003, the Loxahatchee Mitigation Bank has completed the construction phase and the Corkscrew Regional Mitigation Bank is in the final permitting phase.

PROJECT SUMMARIES

The project summary section provides a brief description of each Save Our Rivers project, organized by land management region, including maps of the five management regions. Tables C-2 and C-3 describe land acquisition status and public use opportunities.

UPPER LAKES LAND MANAGEMENT REGION, Orlando Service Center

Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (District managed)

County: Osceola/Polk

Project size: 33,919 acres

District ownership: 33,781

Acquisition partners: None

A management plan for the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes was completed in August 2003. Acquisition of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes project was designed to provide the capacity to store and flow water up to the 54 foot National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) contour line. Public access to most of the land is by boat. Resource management goals for the Chain of Lakes are to maintain and, where possible, restore natural communities, provide cost effective resource protection, and provide opportunities for compatible public use. In FY 03 approximately 10,000 acres were treated for exotic plants. Staff also roller chopped and mowed 2,000 acres of dense wax myrtles and other nuisance plants to improve the conditions of the altered wet prairie communities on Gardner-Cobb Marsh, Lightsey Units, Catfish Creek, and East Shoreline. There are several cattle leases and grazing reservations within the KCOL Management Area. A cultural resource survey was also completed in 2003. Approximately 1,550 acres were burned utilizing prescribed fire.

Lake Marion Creek (District managed)

County: Polk

Project size: 17,300 acres

Public ownership: 7,036

Acquisition partners: Polk County, SWFWMD, USFWS

Lake Marion Creek is in Polk County and flows from Lake Marion to Lake Hatchineha. Contained within the project are scrub, sand hills, pine flatwoods, and riverine swamp forests. Lands in this project have been acquired with the assistance from Polk County, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWC). Primary stewardship activities include prescribed burning, exotic plant control, resource protection, and public use. FWC participates as a cooperative management partner by conducting a hunt program and security patrols. The area is managed as a Type 1 Wildlife Management Area. In 2003, approximately 300 acres of scrub were purchased with off-site mitigation funds to preserve sand skink habitat. Additional scrub may be added in 2004.

Approximately 1,350 acres were burned in 2003. A Florida mouse inventory was completed in May by FWC contractors. The majority of the property is open for hiking year-round and camping and biking are available by Special Use License.

Lake Walk-in-Water (managed by Polk County)

County: Polk

Project size: 4,652 acres

Public ownership: 4,009

Acquisition partners: Polk County

Polk County participated as a 50% acquisition partner under its Environmental Lands Program, and the County is also lead manager. A five year management plan was prepared by the County and approved by SFWMD. It is being managed as the Sumica Natural Area, named after the historic logging town that existed on the site in the 1920s. In 2003 the County treated 45 acres of exotics and burned 214 acres. Current public uses include hiking and primitive camping. Future plans include hunting and horseback riding.

Reedy Creek (District managed)

County: Osceola

Project size: 30,000 acres

District ownership: 5,838

Acquisition partners: None

For management purposes the project is divided into Upper and Lower Reedy Creek. The Upper Reedy Creek Management Area includes those lands north of Pleasant Hill Road and is approximately 4,800 acres. The Lower Reedy Creek Management Area encompasses approximately seven miles of creek corridor and totals 5,838 acres under District ownership. Management goals for both areas are to conserve and protect water resources and supplies, protect and restore the land in its natural state and condition, and provide compatible public use opportunities. The Lake Russell Management Unit in Poinciana is jointly managed by Osceola County Schools as an environmental education facility. A center with classrooms and displays provides interpretation to the scrub, Lake Russell, and the floodplain swamp communities that exist on site. An interpretive hiking trail describes the unique plant communities and wildlife that exist in the scrub habitat of the site. District staff burned 645 acres in 2002 and more than 3,000 acres were treated for control of exotic vegetation. FWC has identified the area of Lower Reedy Creek as a “Strategic Habitat Conservation Area,” a “Biodiversity Hotspot,” and a “Priority Wetland for Listed Species.” These designations make the area a priority for preservation based on known occurrences of rare or listed species. District staff assisted its contractor in tracking and identifying nighttime resting and foraging sites of the southeastern big-eared bat. There are two cattle leases and grazing reservations within the Reedy Creek Management Area.

Shingle Creek (District managed)

County: Orange/Osceola

Project size: 7,655 acres

District ownership: 1,650 acres

Acquisition partners: Mitigation

The District has undertaken several successful restoration projects within Shingle Creek Swamp funded as mitigation to offset wetland impacts associated with construction of the Orlando Beltway. In 2003 the general management plan was updated, 175 acres were prescribe burned, and the entire 1,650 acres were surveyed and spot treated for exotic vegetation. The Marriott development in the northwest corner of the project has constructed a parking area and boardwalk/trail that leads to District-owned lands. Construction of a boardwalk to connect the Marriott boardwalk with other District lands is planned for 2004. In 2003 the developers of the Hunters Creek residential community granted the District a public access easement through its property that will provide parking and a pedestrian walkway to connect with District-owned property.

Tibet Butler Preserve (managed by Orange County)

County: Orange

Project size: 439 acres

District ownership: 439

Acquisition partners: None

The Preserve covers 439 acres along the southwest shore of Lake Tibet Butler in Orange County. Vegetative communities include bay swamp, pine flatwoods, cypress swamp, and smaller areas of xeric oak and freshwater marsh. The Tibet Butler Preserve site includes approximately 4,000 feet of shoreline on Lake Tibet. Orange County Parks and Recreation Department manages Tibet Butler Preserve as an environmental education facility. The property is open for public use. A large enclosed education center with classrooms was constructed in 1994. It has a full-time staff, which conducts programs for thousands of students each year. Land managers also treat exotic vegetation and maintain the system of hiking trails and boardwalks that lead to the many community types on the property. Limited prescribed burning has been done due to the small size of the site and close proximity to roads and urban development.

Upper Lakes Land Management Region

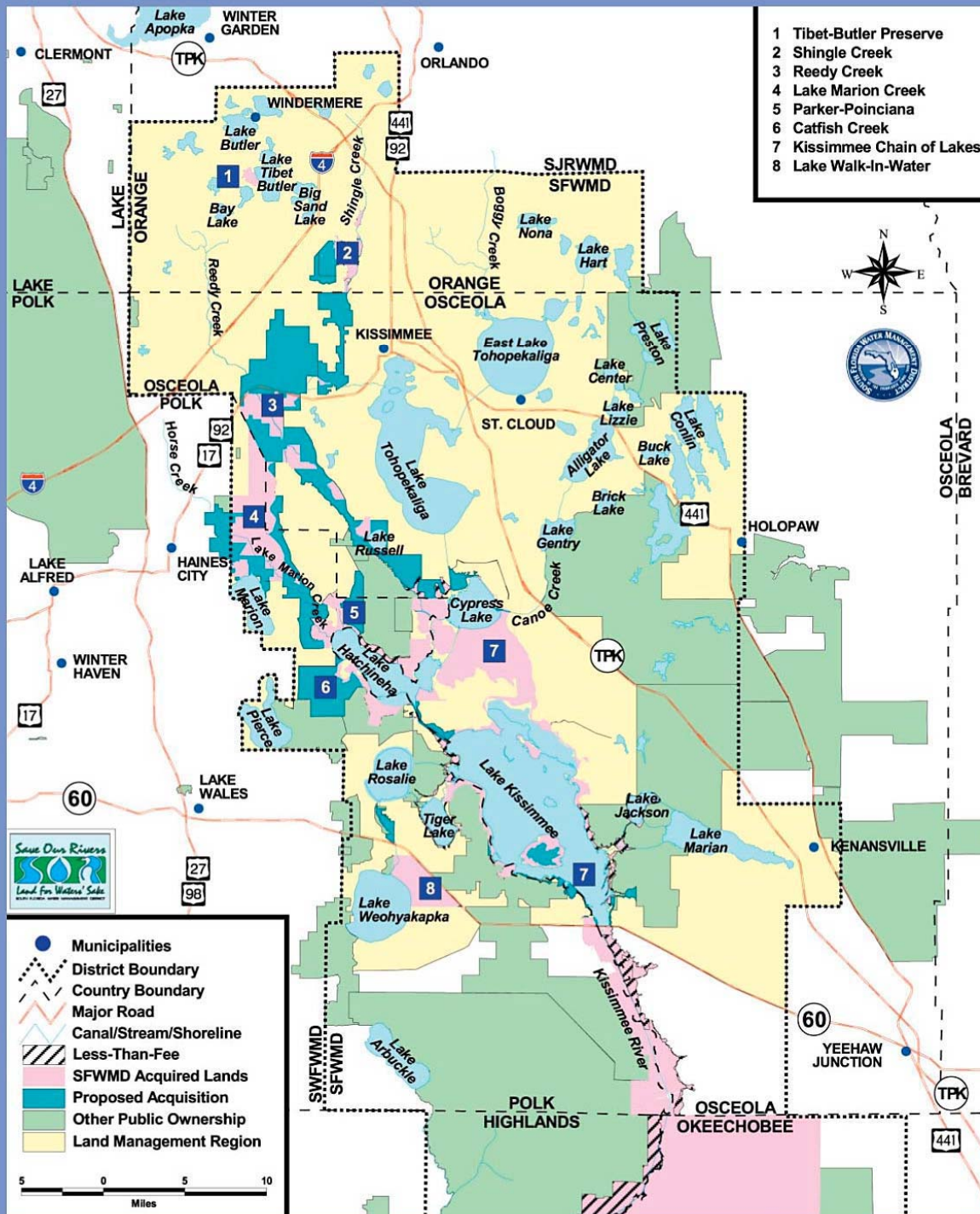


Figure C-1. Upper Lakes Land Management Region.

KISSIMMEE/OKEECHOBEE LAND MANAGEMENT REGION, Okeechobee Service Center

Kissimmee Prairie Ecosystem (managed by DEP)

County: Okeechobee

Project size: 45,631 acres

Public ownership: 38,284 acres

Acquisition partners: CARL

The project is managed by DEP Division of Recreation and Parks under lease from the District and State and is known as Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park. A State-approved management plan is in place that addresses prescribed burning, exotic control, and public use. Recreational uses include hiking, bicycling, camping, and horseback riding. SFWMD obtained a federal grant to restore hydrology to a major slough on the property.

Kissimmee River (managed by District/FWC)

County: Osceola/Polk/Highlands/Okeechobee

Project size: 62,628 acres

District ownership: 51,993

Acquisition partners: None

The District shares management responsibility with FWC in Pools A, C, D, E, and Paradise Run. Management activities in Pools C & D are interim in nature until river restoration is complete. A management plan for Pools C & D was completed in 2002. Exotic plant control and prescribed burning take place above the 100-year flood line on all District lands. District-owned marshes along the river are open below the flood line to airboating and are included in FWC's Kissimmee River Public Use Area, which is open to hunting under FWC regulations. Recently completed river restoration efforts in Pool C will provide excellent opportunities for canoeing, fishing, and camping on District-owned lands along the river. Several new campsites have been established on the area and a newly established "no airboat zone" provides an airboat-free zone on an average 200-yard margin along both edges of the river floodplain to accommodate recreational users and wildlife. Several of the subunits of the Kissimmee River Management Area are open for equestrian and bicycle use, and contain portions of the Florida National Scenic Trail. In 2003, approximately 700 acres were prescribed burned and 3,000 acres were treated for control of exotic vegetation. There are several cattle leases and grazing reservations within the Kissimmee River Management Area.

Paradise Run (District managed)

County: Glades

Project size: 4,265 acres

District ownership: 1,673

Acquisition partners: None

The project lies west of Canal-38, between Structure-65 E and Lake Okeechobee. Unlike the other pools of the Kissimmee River, Level II backfilling (river restoration) will not reflood Paradise Run, since it is controlled by the stage in Lake Okeechobee. Remnant river oxbows are still present, although the surrounding land has been drained and is now improved pasture. Paradise Run is open for public use, including hunting, under FWC's Public Use Area concept. There are two cattle leases in Paradise Run.

Kissimmee/Okeechobee Land Management Region

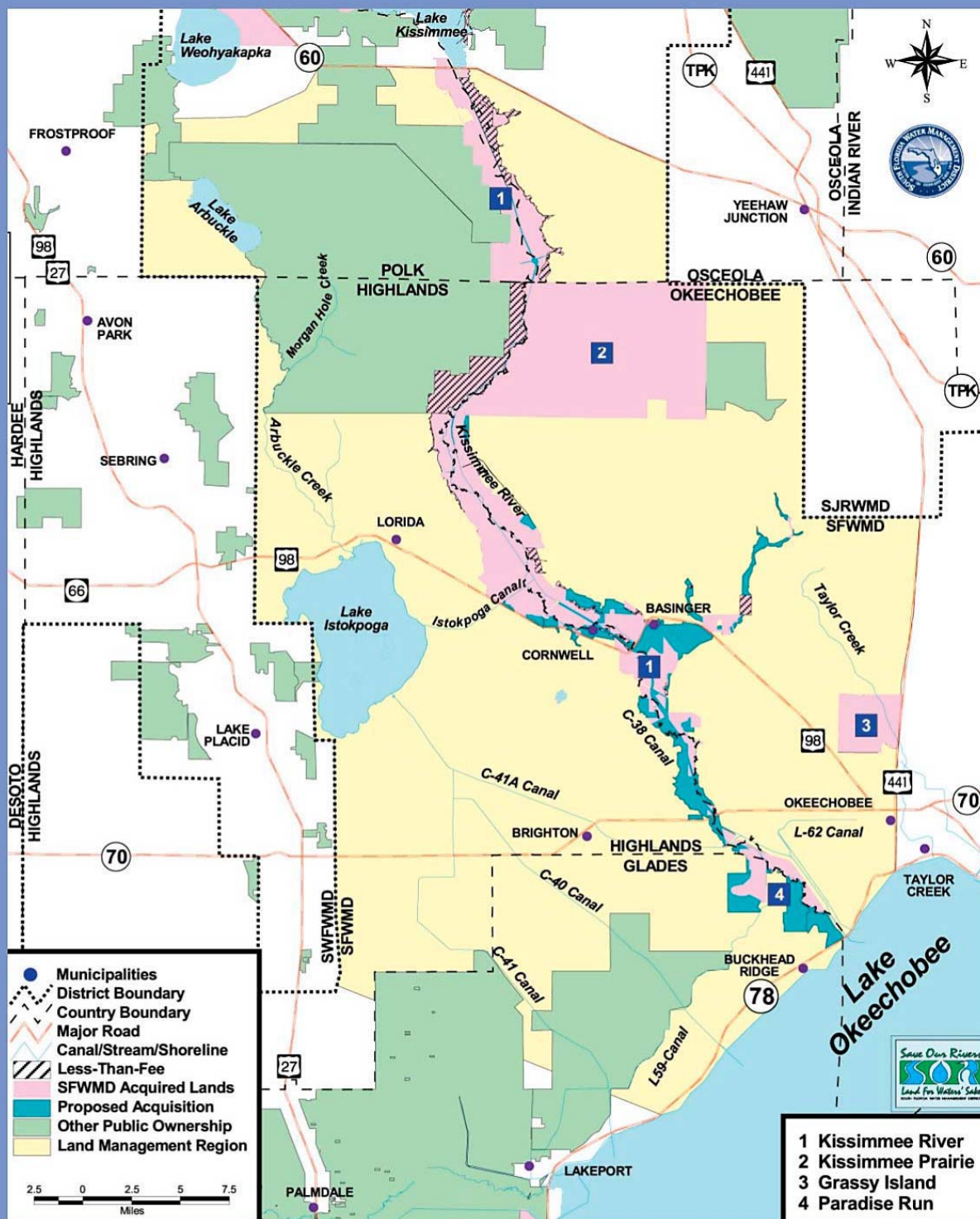


Figure C-2. Kissimmee/Okeechobee Land Management Region.

EAST COAST LAND MANAGEMENT REGION, West Palm Beach/DuPuis

Allapattah Flats (District managed)

County: Martin

Project size: 22,560 acres

Public ownership: 20,485 acres

Acquisition partners: Martin County, Federal Government

The property was purchased as part of the Indian River Lagoon Initiative of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP), with funding assistance from Martin County and the federal government. It is proposed that the ditches and swales that were excavated to drain and improve the property for cattle grazing will be plugged and filled, and the ranch's extensive wetlands allowed to reflood. Restoration will be funded through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetland Reserve Program. Flood attenuation and water quality improvement are the expected outcomes from the project. Final determination of the lead managing agency is yet to be determined, but the District will be lead manager in the interim. A management plan is under development that will address hydrologic/habitat restoration, exotic vegetation control, prescribed burning, and public use.

Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem (managed by Department of Environmental Protection)

County: Martin

Project size: 13,122 acres

Public ownership: 6,094 acres

Acquisition partners: CARL

Atlantic Ridge is being managed by DEP, Division of Recreation and Parks, under a joint management lease from SFWMD and the Division of State Lands. The area will be known as Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park. A management plan is near completion that outlines the goals and objectives for the park. The plan describes hydrologic restoration and staffing needs, plans for exotic control and prescribed burning, and a public use program. It is proposed that initial public facilities use will include an interpretive kiosk, trailhead and hiking trails, camping, and equestrian trails with an on site stable and paddocks. Public access to the property is anticipated in 2004 through a new residential development off Cove Road. The management lease has been modified to remove the lands along the west bank of the South Fork St. Lucie River from state responsibility and turn them over to Martin County for management.

Cypress Creek/Loxahatchee (managed by District/Palm Beach County)

County: Palm Beach/Martin

Project size: 4,184 acres

Public ownership: 3,547

Acquisition partners: Martin/Palm Beach counties

The project is divided between Martin and Palm Beach counties and forms connections with Pal-Mar and District-owned lands in Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Nearly 3,000 acres are high quality natural area, containing a mixture of pine flatwoods, cypress swamps, and freshwater marshes. The area is the headwaters to Cypress Creek, a major tributary to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. The remainder of the site has been cleared and used for intensive agriculture for many years. In 2003 more than 3,500 acres were purchased; and following the closing exotics were treated over the entire site. Restoration plans are underway to enhance the impacted natural areas and convert the agricultural lands to reservoirs or treatment marshes as a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program.

DuPuis Management Area (managed by District/FWC)

County: Palm Beach/Martin

Project size: 21,875 acres

District ownership: 21,875

Acquisition partners: None

The five year management plan is being updated and will be completed in late 2003. SFWMD and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) jointly manage DuPuis. Stewardship activities include prescribed burning, exotic plant control, upland shrub control, wildlife management, and a forest management program to reintroduce red-cockaded woodpeckers. In 2003, approximately 4,280 acres were burned, 5,510 acres were chemically treated for exotic plants, 910 acres of overgrown shrub vegetation were mechanically shredded, and 25 acres of pine seedlings were planted. An environmental education facility at the DuPuis headquarters building that includes indoor displays and an interpretive trail opened in April 2003. A 7 1/2 mile auto tour also opened in September 2003. An extensive public use program at DuPuis that attracts thousands of visitors annually includes hunting, fishing, equestrian trails, hiking, and camping.

Indian River Lagoon (managed by St. Lucie County)

County: St. Lucie/Martin

Project size: 1,550 acres

Public ownership: 598

Acquisition partners: St. Lucie County, CARL, Federal Government

Indian River Lagoon is managed by St. Lucie County under a lease from SFWMD and the Division of State Lands. IRL property is incorporated into the County's mosquito control program

where mosquitoes are controlled by non-chemical means. This method results in greatly improved water quality and wildlife and fisheries habitat in the lagoon. Mosquito impoundment berms are accessible to the public and provide excellent opportunities for fishing, crabbing, and bird watching. The property includes ocean beachfront. Plans are under way to remove exotic Australian pines and provide public beach access.

Loxahatchee Mitigation Bank (District managed)

County: Palm Beach

Project size: 1,256 acres

District ownership: 1,256

Acquisition partners: None

The Loxahatchee Mitigation Bank site lies adjacent to the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. The location of this site will provide habitat connectivity that augments existing Everglades wetland systems. Brazilian pepper and other exotics have degraded the area, adversely impacting native wildlife habitat, including a number of threatened and endangered species. The goal of the bank is to restore habitat values and provide enhancement of a degraded Everglades ecosystem through hydroperiod restoration, exotic vegetation removal, re-vegetation with desired species, and prescribed burning. Through an open and competitive solicitation process Tetra Tech FW was selected to establish the Loxahatchee Mitigation Bank. Permitting and construction have been completed, exotic enhancements are ongoing.

Loxahatchee River (managed by Palm Beach County/DEP)

County: Palm Beach

Project size: 1,936 acres

District ownership: 1,926 acres

Acquisition partners: None

District-owned lands along the river are managed by DEP Division of Recreation and Parks and Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department. DEP manages the area north of SR 706 (Indiantown Road) as part of Jonathan Dickinson State Park. The County manages the lands south of the road as Riverbend County Park. Both managers have done extensive treatment of exotics. Palm Beach County, in conjunction with the District, is completing hydrologic restoration of its management area in an attempt to restore a major tributary to the Loxahatchee River. The restoration project will enable water to be delivered to the river through a more natural flow way. DEP manages its lands under the Jonathan Dickinson State Park plan. The county has a development plan for Riverbend Park. A management plan will be developed as park development progresses.

Loxahatchee Slough (managed by District/Palm Beach County)

County: Palm Beach

Project size: 15,200 acres

District ownership: 1,425 acres

Acquisition partners: None

The District is currently managing the Sandhill Crane portion of the project--the 1,425 acres tract purchased by the District, but a transfer of ownership is underway that will result in Palm Beach County owning the property and their Department of Environmental Resources Management managing the lands. The County owns more than 10,000 acres in the Loxahatchee Slough Natural Area, which adjoins the Sandhill tract. In 2003 ditch plugs were installed to restore hydrologic sheetflow, more than 1,000 acres of exotic vegetation were treated, 100 acres were prescribe burned, and 50 acres of former flatwoods were planted with 35,000 south Florida slash pine seedlings under a cooperative agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetland Reserve Program.

North Fork St. Lucie River (managed by St. Lucie County/DEP)

County: St. Lucie

Project size: 3,800 acres

Public ownership: 378 acres

Acquisition partners: St. Lucie County, CARL

State, County, and District-owned lands along the North Fork are being managed by St. Lucie County and DEP, as part of the North Fork Aquatic Preserve. Both agencies are treating exotics and conducting limited prescribed burns. Burning is extremely difficult due to the surrounding urban development. St. Lucie County constructed and operates the Oxbow Eco-center, an environmental education facility along the river in Port St. Lucie that incorporates indoor displays with outdoor programming that utilizes interpretive trails, towers, and boardwalks. In 2003 the end of an historic oxbow of the North Fork that had been blocked by river channelization was successfully reconnected. Improvements in water quality and the fishery are already being noticed.

Pal-Mar (managed by FWC/Palm Beach County)

County: Palm Beach/Martin

Project size: 36,745 acres

Public ownership: 10,307 acres

Acquisition partners: CARL/Palm Beach County

State and District-owned lands are under management lease to FWC using an approved management plan. Resource inventories are being conducted by FWC and exotic infestations have been mapped. Exotic treatments and prescribed burning are ongoing. The property is open for public use that includes hiking, primitive camping, hunting, and fishing. Bicycling and equestrian trails are also planned. FWC is managing the Martin County lands as the John C. and Mariana Jones

Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area. A permit was issued in 2003 by Martin County to remove spoil and associated exotic vegetation from the canal banks. Associated construction will also provide parking and public access from County Road 711. In 2003 the State approved purchase of Palm Beach County lands that are north of SR 706 (Indiantown Road) from the County for management by FWC. Palm Beach County will continue to manage their lands south of Indiantown Road as the Pal-Mar Natural Area.

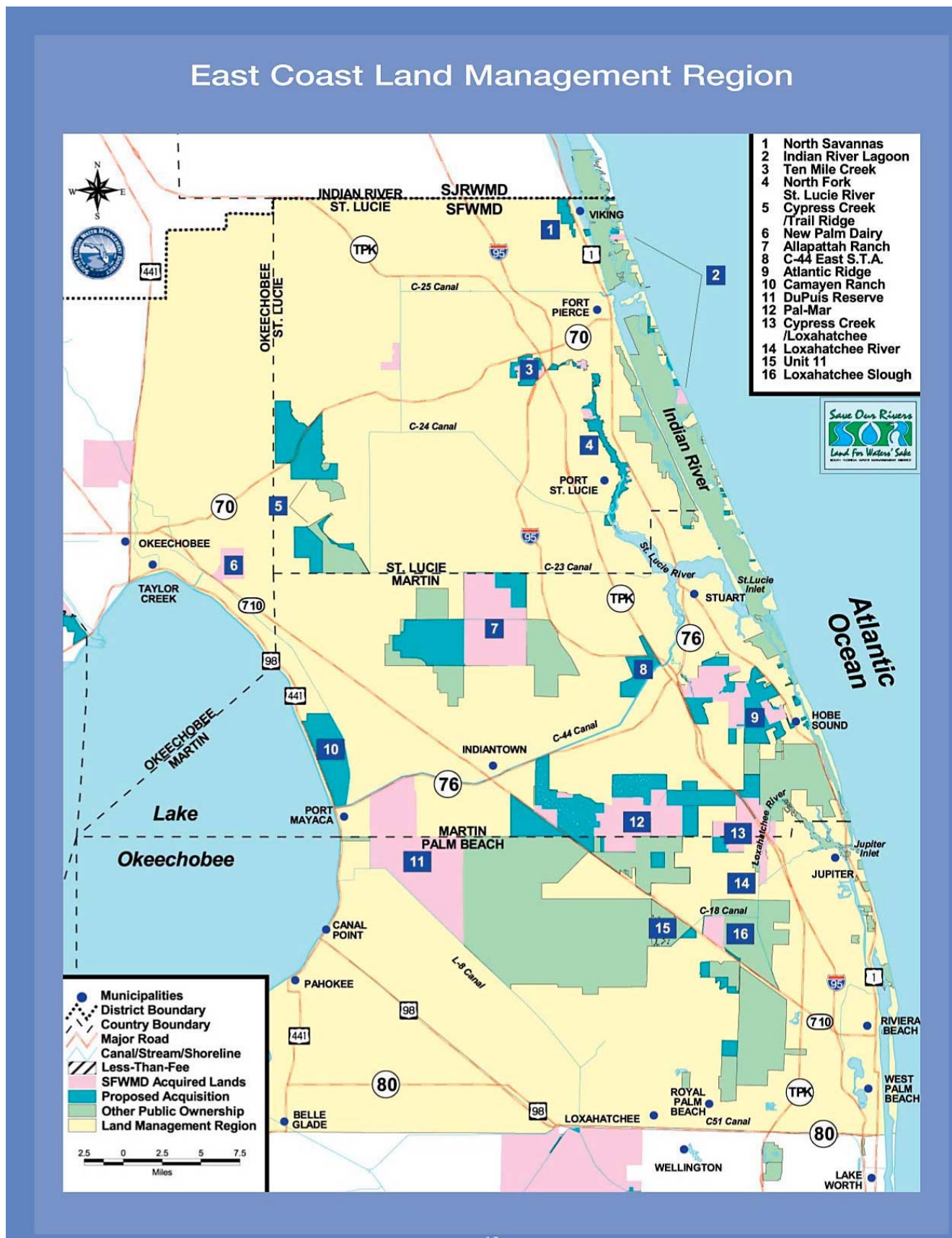


Figure C-3. East Coast Land Management Region.

EVERGLADES LAND MANAGEMENT REGION, Miami Service Center

Model Lands (District managed)

County: Miami-Dade

Project size: 42,402 acres

Public ownership: 4,160 acres

Acquisition partners: Miami-Dade County

The Model Lands project will play a vital role in conveyance and treatment of sheetflow from the south Dade area to the downstream estuaries. It is a combination of fresh and saltwater wetlands, portions of which are heavily infested with exotic vegetation. Although more than 4,000 acres are in public ownership there is no public use program due to lack of legal access and patchy ownership. A large-scale project is currently underway to identify and post District owned properties. The major management activities have been treating exotic vegetation and restricting ORV use that causes long-term ecological impacts. Hydrologic restoration is necessary and is planned under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. A management plan for the area is currently under development. In 2003, over 200 acres of exotics were treated for the first time and follow up was completed on more than 1,500 acres.

Southern Glades (managed by FWC)

County: Miami-Dade

Project size: 37,620 acres

District ownership: 33,938 acres

Acquisition partners: None

Southern Glades is managed by FWC, under a lease agreement, as the Southern Glades Wildlife and Environmental Area. It is open to hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, airboating, bicycling, and horseback riding (see the seasons and times set forth by FWC). The District is directing mitigation funds for habitat restoration that includes exotic removal and revegetation with native species. In 2003 a fishing platform was constructed, 1500 acres were prescribe burned, and 100 acres of exotics were chemically treated. A small native hammock was created near the main entrance to the area along SW 232 St. and the large mature hammock known as Lucky Hammock was augmented with native shrubs. A trail was created through the center of the hammock which has become known to birders as one of the premiere observation locations and a great place to see rare migratory species in south Florida.

Everglades Land Management Region

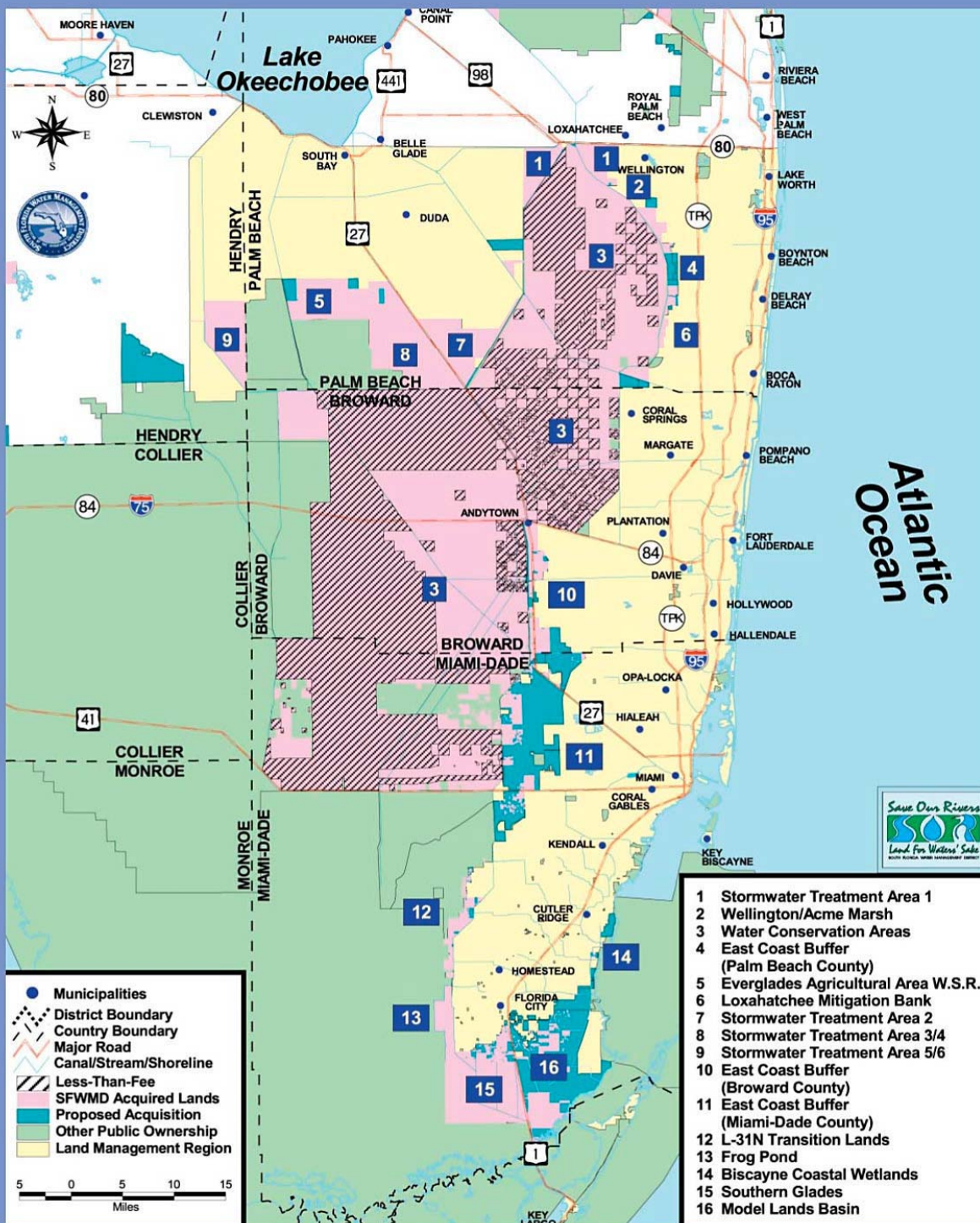


Figure C-4. Everglades Land Management Region.

WEST COAST LAND MANAGEMENT REGION, Ft. Myers Service Center

Corkscrew Regional Mitigation Bank

County: Lee

Project size: 633 acres

District ownership: 633 acres

Acquisition partners: None

The Corkscrew Regional Mitigation bank is located in southern Lee County, along Corkscrew Road (SR 850). It is adjacent to the Imperial Marsh Stairstep mitigation area, which has been established to offset impacts associated with the Southwest Florida Regional Airport. The goal of the bank is to improve habitat values and restore the historic function of the upland/wetland mosaic through hydroperiod restoration, exotic vegetation removal, and prescribed burning. The Corkscrew bank site contributes to corridor building and the green infrastructure within the regional context. Mariner Properties Development, selected through an open and competitive solicitation process, is establishing the Corkscrew Regional Mitigation Bank. Permitting for the bank site is in progress.

Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) (managed by District/FWC)

County: Lee, Collier

Project size: 59,312 acres

Public ownership: 25,089 acres

Acquisition partners: Lee County, CARL

The SFWMD and FWC jointly manage CREW. The public use and environmental education program is directed by the CREW Land and Water Trust. The management plan was updated in 2002 and describes plans for exotic control, prescribed burning, upland restoration opportunities, and public use. Property boundaries are posted and FWC wildlife officers patrol the property. In 2003, approximately 1,041 acres were prescribe burned and 11,860 acres of exotics were treated. At the CREW Management Center mitigation funds were used to restore an old agricultural site by backfilling 1.5 miles of impoundment levees/canal and planting 12 acres with native groundcover, shrubs, and trees. Forty additional acres were revegetated with native trees at a second management area. Although the District, State, and Lee County have acquired more than 25,000 acres, only a narrow strip of Corkscrew Marsh along SR 850 is legally accessible. At that location the CREW Trust and SFWMD have developed an interpretive hiking trail and constructed an observation platform that overlooks Corkscrew Marsh. An extensive network of tram roads in Bird Rookery Swamp will provide public use opportunities to more than 6,000 acres of CREW. There is one grazing lease on the CREW Management Area.

Nicodemus Slough (managed by Aim Engineering, Inc.)

County: Glades

Project size: 2,219 acres

District ownership: 2,219 acres

Acquisition partners: None

Nicodemus Slough is the only SOR tract under management by a private entity. The District contracts with Aim Engineering, Inc. for management services that include exotic control, prescribed burning, and maintaining the public use facilities. A hydrologic restoration project that was undertaken by the District many years ago has been disappointing and has caused much dissatisfaction with the adjoining property owner. The District has been attempting to reach a suitable agreement with the adjoining landowner in which the property would be sold to them and a conservation easement would be retained by the District.

Okaloacoochee Slough (managed by Division of Forestry/FWC)

County: Hendry, Collier

Project size: 37,210 acres

Public ownership: 34,429 acres

Acquisition partners: CARL, FWC, DOF

The Division of Forestry (DOF) and FWC purchased additional lands in the project that expand the original District/state purchase. The project is managed as Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest with DOF as the lead manager, and FWC responsible for wildlife management under a 4-party lease agreement with the Division of State Lands and the District. FWC manages the project as a Type 1 wildlife management area and conducts a public hunt program. An approved management plan is in place. In 2003, approximately 3,000 acres were prescribe burned and 2,800 acres of exotic vegetation were chemically treated.

Six Mile Cypress (managed by Lee County)

County: Lee

Project size: 1,741 acres

Public ownership: 829 acres

Acquisition partners: Lee County

The property is jointly owned by Lee County and the District and has been managed by Lee County Parks and Recreation since acquisition began. The management plan was updated in 2002. Treatment of exotic vegetation is ongoing. Prescribed burning is difficult due to the surrounding urban development. The County built and maintains a boardwalk and outdoor classroom facility that is used by 35,000 Lee County students and citizens each year. Six Mile Cypress likely has the highest rate of public visitation of any SOR project.

West Coast Land Management Region

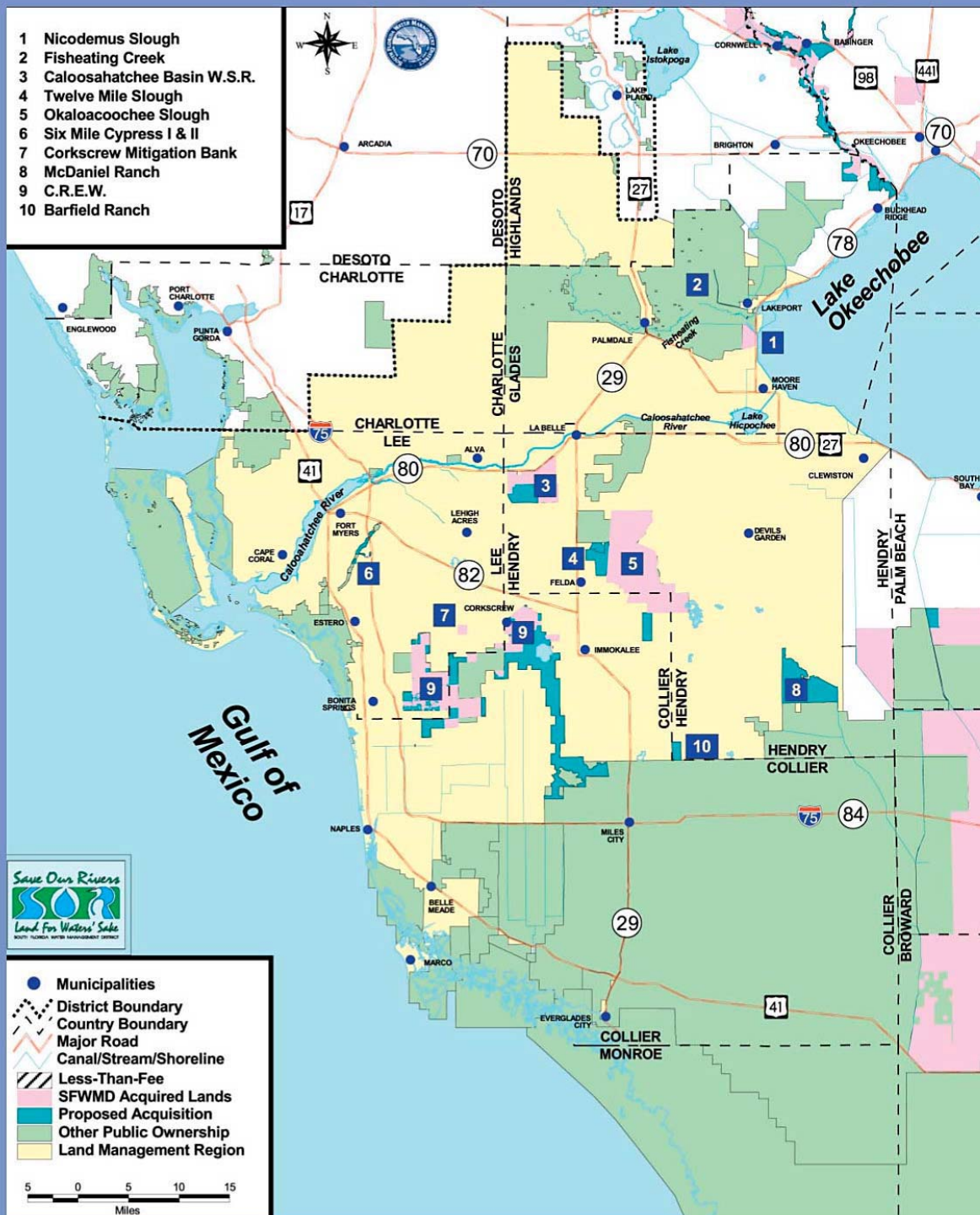


Figure C-5. West Coast Land Management Region.

Table C-2 Land Stewardship Program Acquisition Summary-2003

Project Name	County	Size (Acres)	Acres Acquired	Acquisition Partners
Allapattah Flats	Martin	22,560	20,485	Martin County/Fed.
Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem	Martin	13,122	6,094	CARL
CREW Mitigation Bank	Lee	633	633	None
CREW	Lee/Collier	59,312	25,089	CARL/Lee County
Cypress Creek	Martin/Palm Beach County	4,184	3,547	Palm Beach County
DuPuis	PB/Martin	21,875	21,875	None
Indian River Lagoon	Martin/St. Lucie	1,550	598	St. Lucie County/ CARL/Federal
Kissimmee Chain of Lakes	Polk/Osceola	33,919	33,781	None
Kissimmee Prairie	Okeechobee	45,631	38,284	CARL
Kissimmee River	Highlands/Okee/ Polk/Osceola	62,628	51,993	None
Lake Marion Creek	Polk	17,300	7,036	Polk County
Lake Walk-in-Water	Polk	4,009	4,009	Polk County
Loxahatchee Mitigation Bank	Palm Beach	1,256	1,256	None
Loxahatchee River	PB/Martin	1,936	1,926	None
Loxahatchee Slough	Palm Beach	15,200	1,425	None
Model Lands	Miami-Dade	42,402	4,160	Miami-Dade County
Nicodemus Slough	Glades	2,219	2,219	None
N. Fork St. Lucie River	St. Lucie	3,800	378	St. Lucie County/ CARL
Okaloacoochee Slough	Hendry/Collier	37,210	34,429	CARL/DOF/FWC
Pal-Mar	PB/Martin	36,745	10,307	CARL
Paradise Run	Glades	4,265	1,673	None
Reedy Creek	Osceola	30,000	5,838	None
Shingle Creek	Orange	7,655	1,650	None
Six Mile Cypress	Lee	1,741	829	Lee County
Southern Glades	Miami-Dade	37,620	33,938	None
Tibet-Butler Preserve	Orange	439	439	None
Water Conservation Areas	PB/Brow/Dade	105,047	51,421	None
	Totals	614,258	365,312	

Table C-3 Public Use Opportunities

Land Management Region	Lead Manager	Public Access	Environ. Education	Hunting	Horseback Riding	Airboating	Camping	Hiking
Upper Lakes Region								
Kissimmee Chain of Lakes	SFWMD	●		●	●	●	●	●
Lake Marion Creek	SFWMD	●		●		●	●	●
Lake Walk-in-Water	Polk County	●					●	●
Reedy Creek	SFWMD	●	●					●
Shingle Creek	SFWMD	●						●
Tibet-Butler Preserve	Orange County	●	●					●
Kissimmee-Okeechobee Region								
Kissimmee Prairie	DEP	●			●		●	●
Kissimmee River	SFWMD	●		●	●	●	●	●
Paradise Run	SFWMD	●		●		●		●
East Coast Region								
Allapattah Flats	SFWMD	none						
Atlantic Ridge	DEP	none						
DuPuis	SFWMD	●	●	●	●		●	●
Indian River Lagoon	St. Lucie County	●						●
Loxahatchee River	DEP	●			●		●	●
Loxahatchee Slough	SFWMD	none						
North Fork St. Lucie River	DEP	●	●					●
Pal-Mar	FWC	●		●			●	
Everglades Region								
Everglades Buffer Strip	SFWMD	●						●
Model Lands	SFWMD	none						
Southern Glades	FWC	●		●	●	●	●	●
West Coast Region								
CREW	SFWMD	●	●	●			●	●
Nicodemus Slough	Aim Engineering, Inc.	●		●		●		●
Okaloacoochee Slough	DOF	●		●	●		●	●
Six Mile Cypress	Lee County	●						●

INTERIM PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

Background

The Interim Property Management Program is responsible for managing those properties acquired by the District for future Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP) and other projects until such time as the land is needed for construction. These lands will ultimately be used as stormwater treatment areas, surface water reservoirs, groundwater recharge areas, and/or buffer lands between the Everglades and other sensitive areas and urban development. These lands are not specifically acquired or designated for environmental enhancement, restoration or preservation purposes, and generally, they are not proposed for recreational or other public uses except on a limited basis that is consistent with their future use.

The Interim Property Management program was initially developed in 1997 to manage the Stormwater Treatment Area (STA), Water Preserve/Management Area (WPA/WMA), and East Coast Buffer (ECB) lands during the interim period while acquisition, planning, design, and construction for these projects was taking place. It has since evolved to include other lands acquired by the District for future CERP and other similar construction projects throughout the District. The Land Management Department (LMD) has developed a multi-faceted management approach that:

- protects the natural resource
- provides on-site management and security for District owned lands at a minimal cost to the District
- minimizes District expenses by increasing revenue from non-governmental sources to off-set District management, maintenance and resource protection costs
- generates additional funding for future acquisition
- minimizes impacts to the local agricultural economy by keeping viable agricultural lands in active production for as long as possible, and
- minimizes fiscal impacts to the local government by keeping lands on the tax roll until they are actually needed for construction.

Where appropriate, historical uses of properties, such as grazing, sod, vegetable, and sugar cane farming, and nurseries and tree farms, are allowed to continue through the use of reservations, leases or similar agreements. Generally, a competitive bid process is used to solicit proposals and award contracts, which include the appropriate cancellation clauses so the land can be quickly made available when it is needed. In some cases, short term leases (5 years or less) are negotiated as part of the acquisition package. Lessees are typically required to actively manage the property, control exotics, provide security for the property, implement applicable best management practices (BMPs), keep the property and facilities in good repair and condition, obtain all required permits and approvals for their activities, maintain required insurance coverage, pay applicable taxes, etc.

For those lands that are in their natural state and/or where some type of active interim use is inappropriate due to the environmental sensitivity of the land and/or the projected construction timetable for the project for which the land has been acquired, Interim Property Management either manages these lands themselves or contracts with another governmental entity. Interim Property Management conducts an ongoing property management program and oversees exotic control, cleanup, security and any other activities necessary to maintain the lands in good condition.

During FY 2003, the Interim Property Management program was responsible for over 135,000 acres of land, of which approximately 113,135 acres were managed under 59 different leases or management agreements. Most of the leases are with private individuals or companies, but the Interim Property Management Program does have one management agreement with a local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), pursuant to Chapter 373.1392(1)(d), F.S.

The Interim Property Management program is currently staffed by a group of eight professionals with expertise in real estate, engineering, finance, business administration, property management, planning, and regulation. They are responsible for managing these lands through the development of land management plans, implementation and management of leases, regular property inspections, and appropriate follow up activities, including exotic control, fencing, clean up, security, etc. on non-leased lands.

The 2003 budget for Interim Property Management was \$1,043,395. This includes personnel costs, contractual expenses for activities such as exotic control, cleanup, security, etc., and general administrative costs. Total revenue generated by LMD from leases, sale of products, and other alternative sources for the year was \$2,829,401. This was in addition to the \$2,828,375 in avoided management costs (calculated at an average cost of \$25 per acre) due to the 59 leases and management agreements in place for the 113,135 acres under contract.

Appendix D

CERP IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

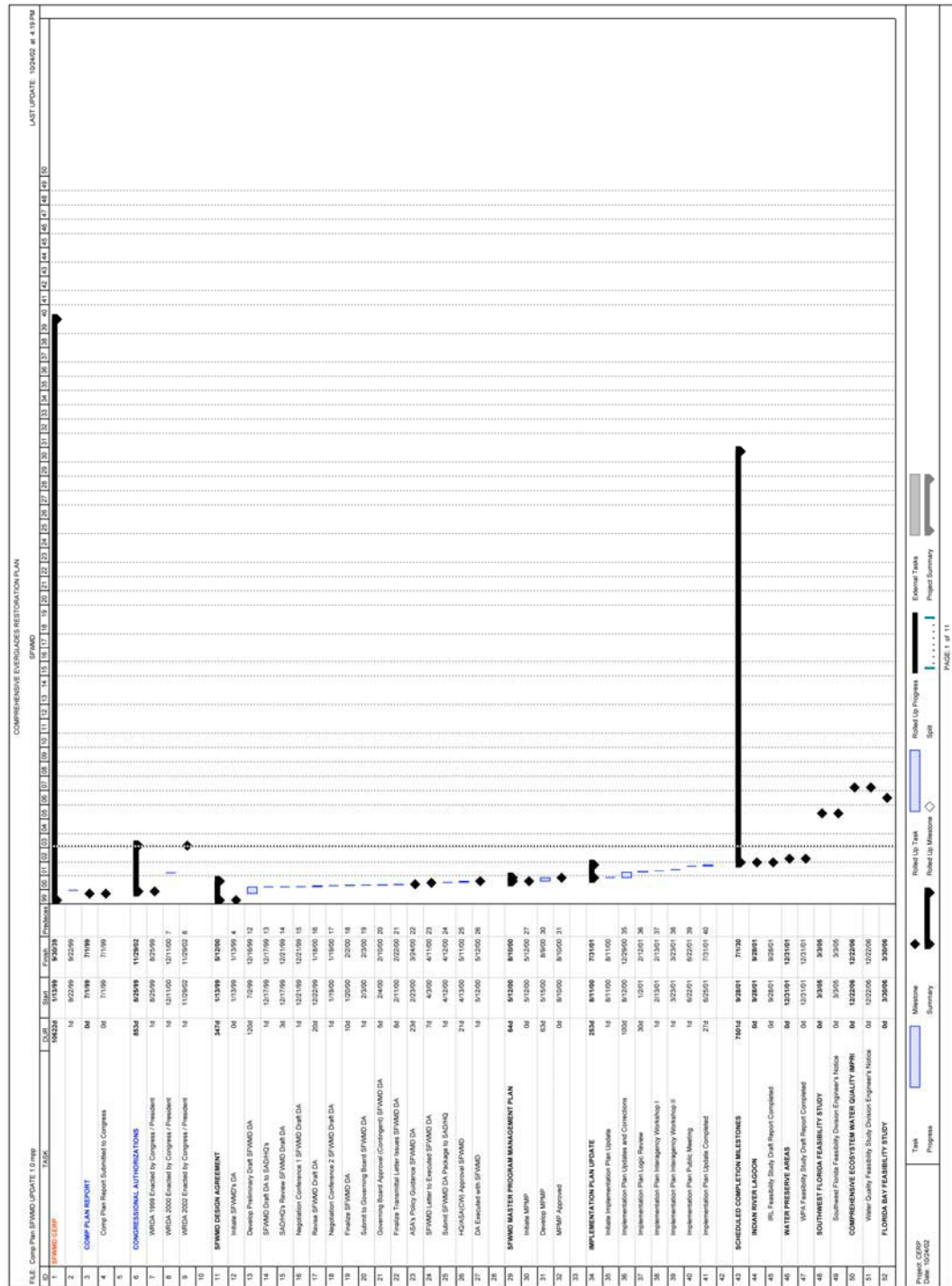
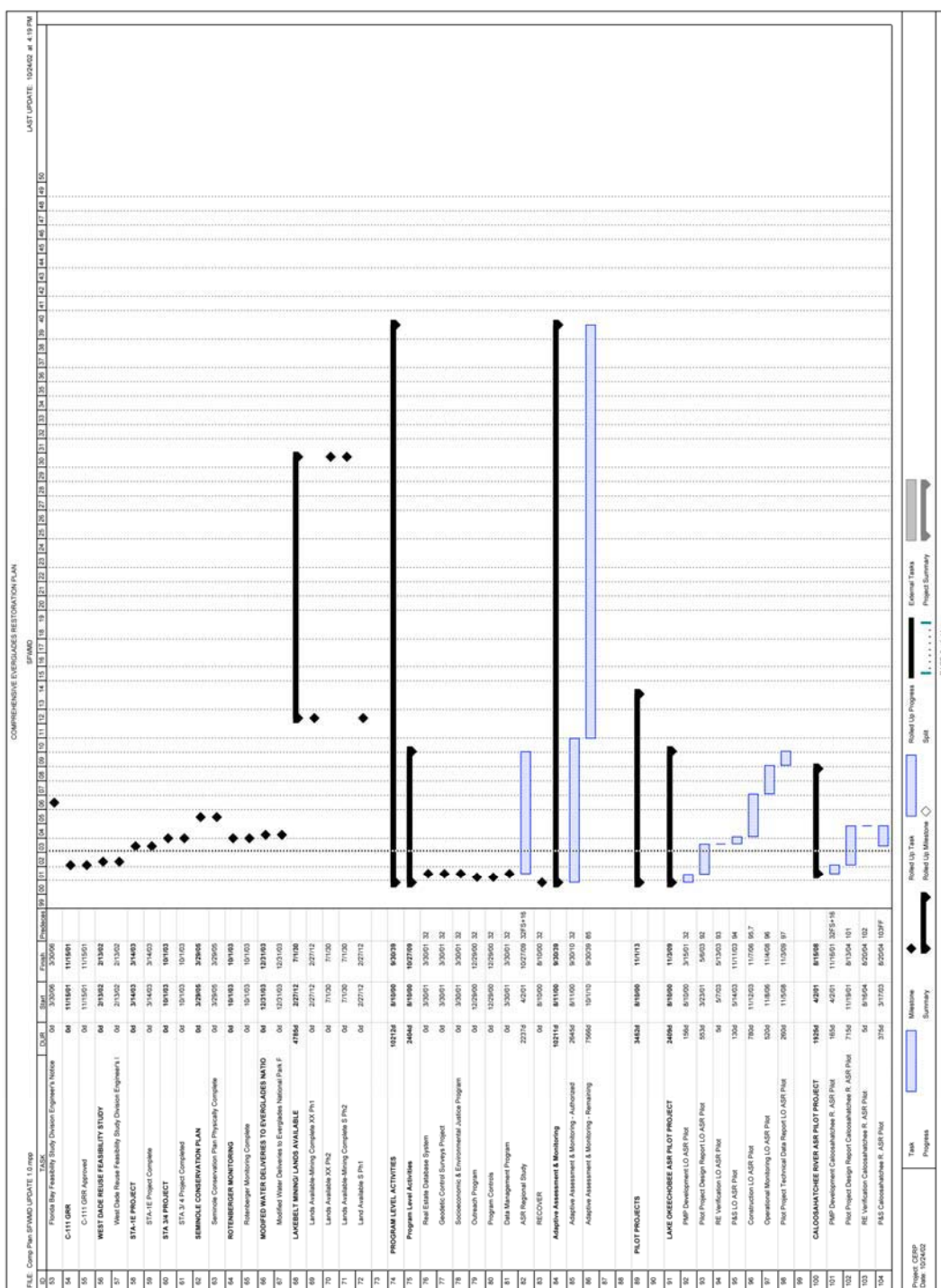


Figure D-1. July 2001 Implementation Schedule of Components Contained in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.



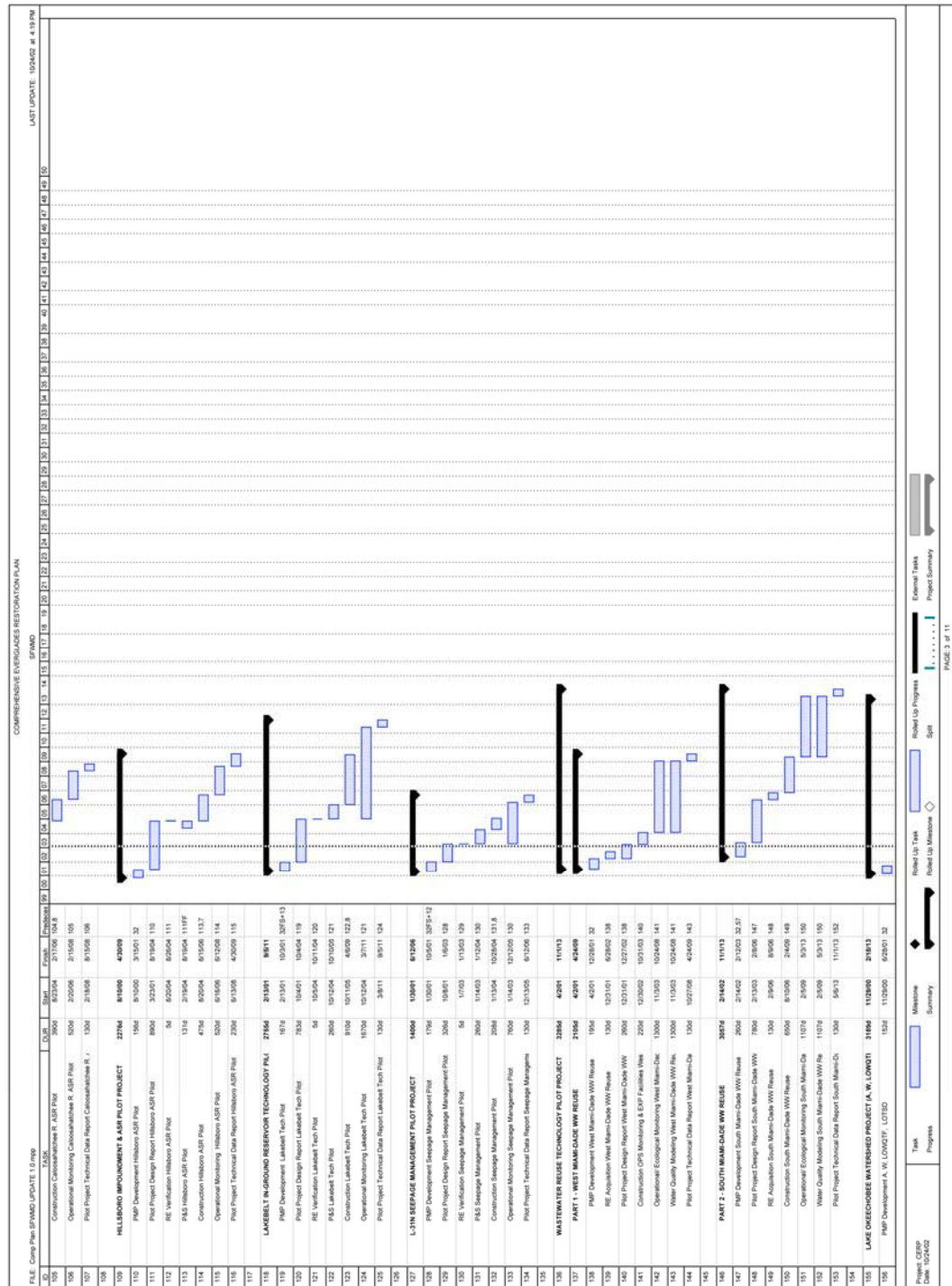
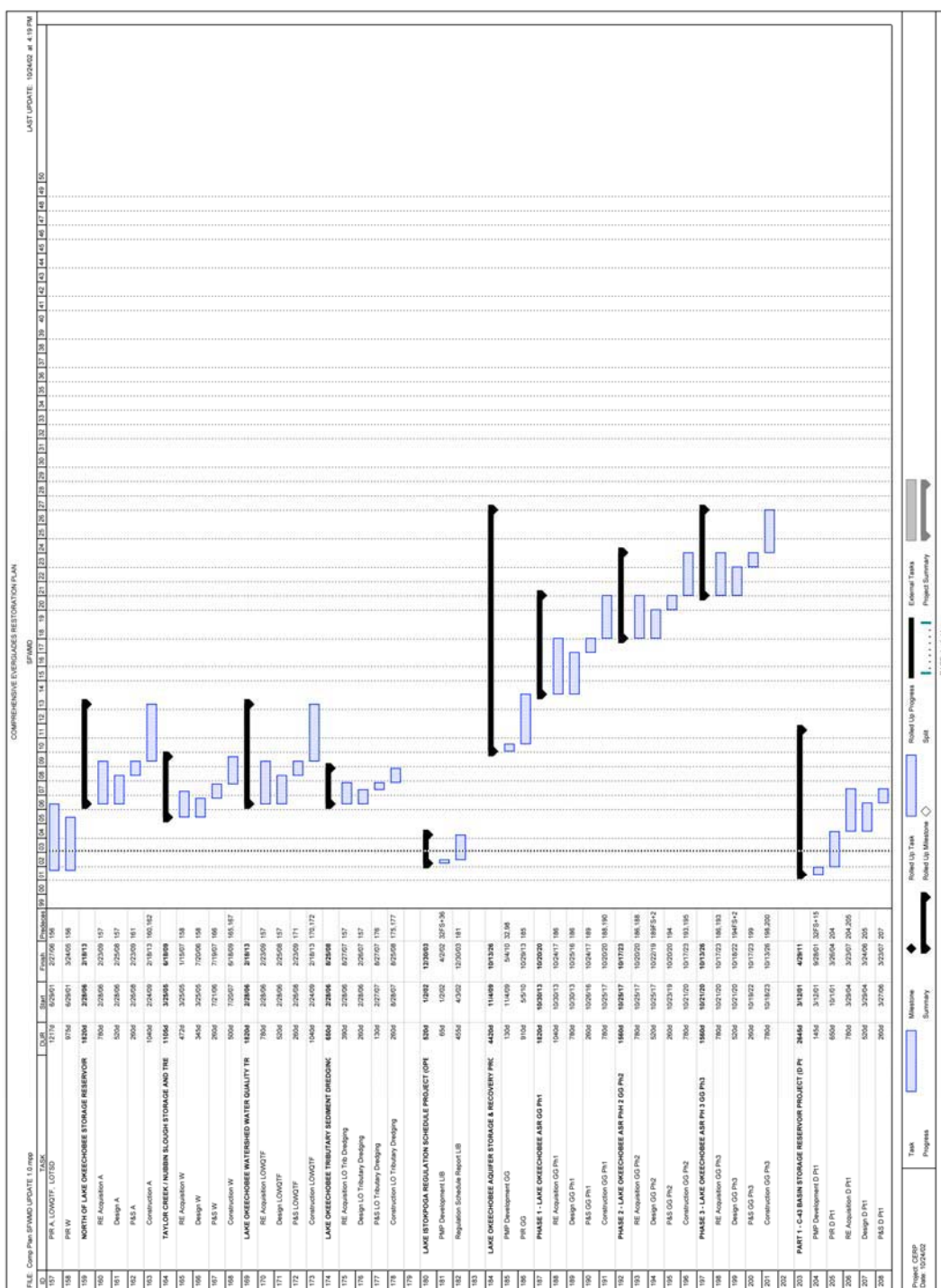


Figure D-1. July 2001 Implementation Schedule of Components Contained in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (Continued).



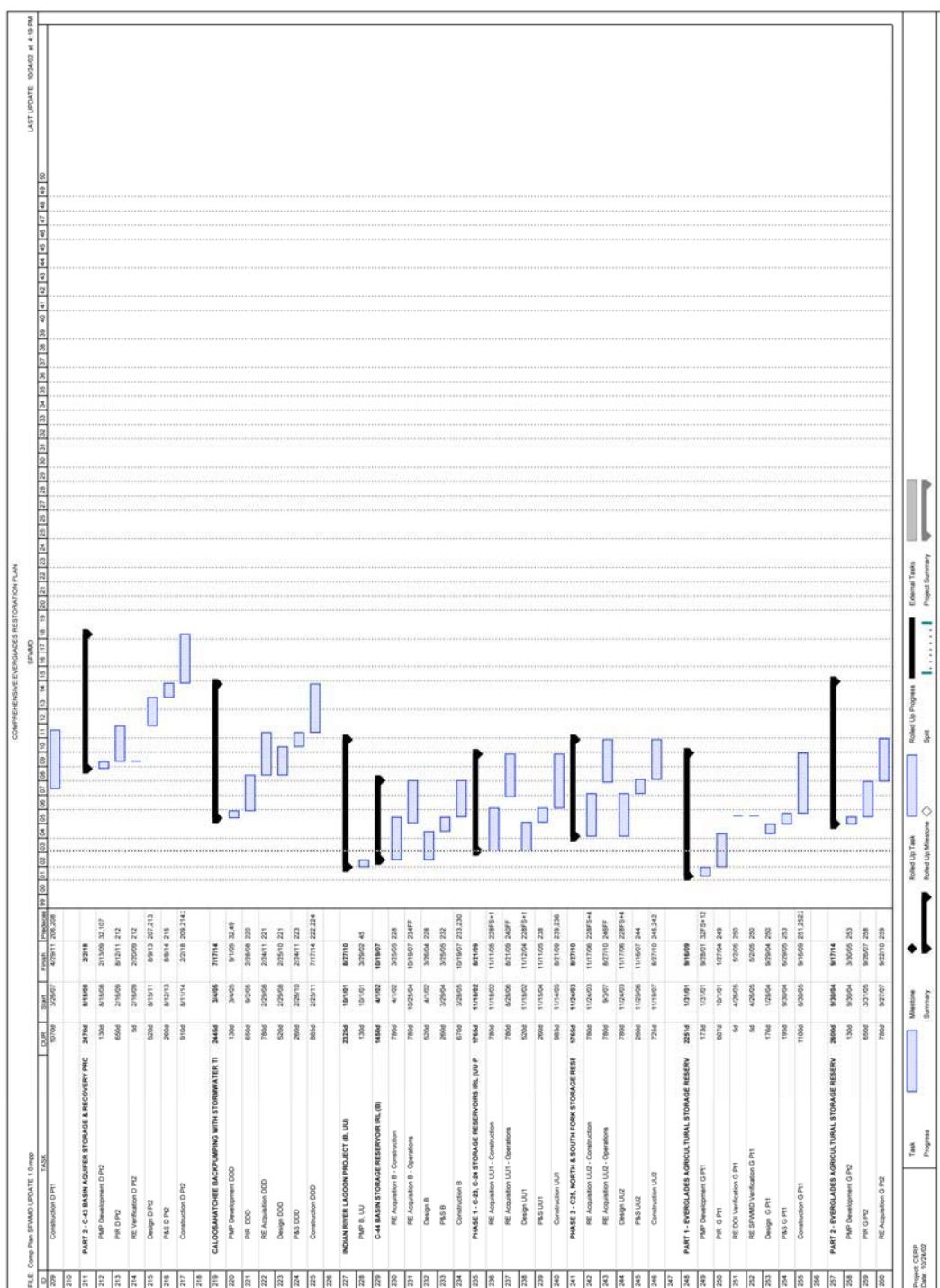
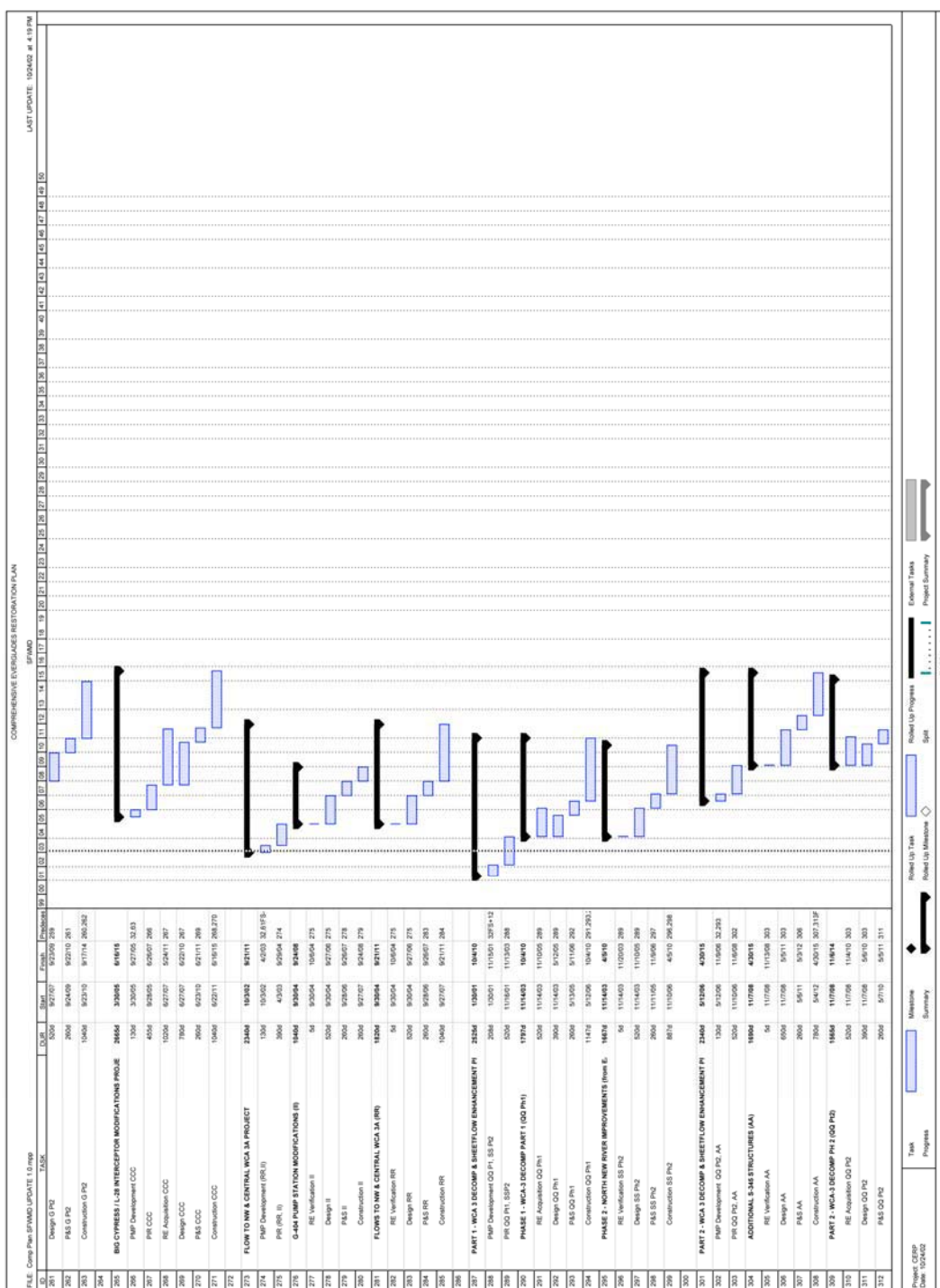


Figure D-1. July 2001 Implementation Schedule of Components Contained in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (Continued).



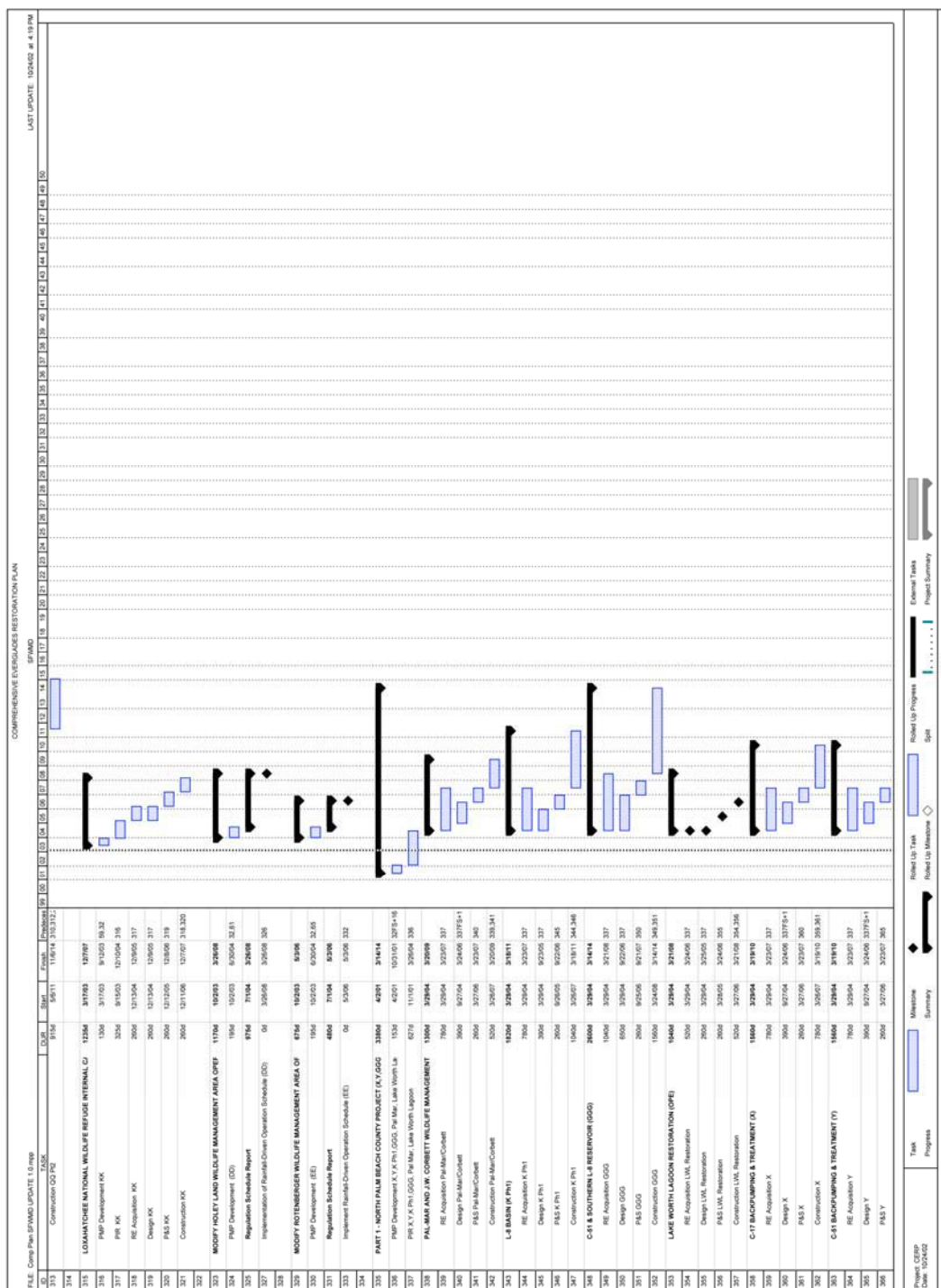
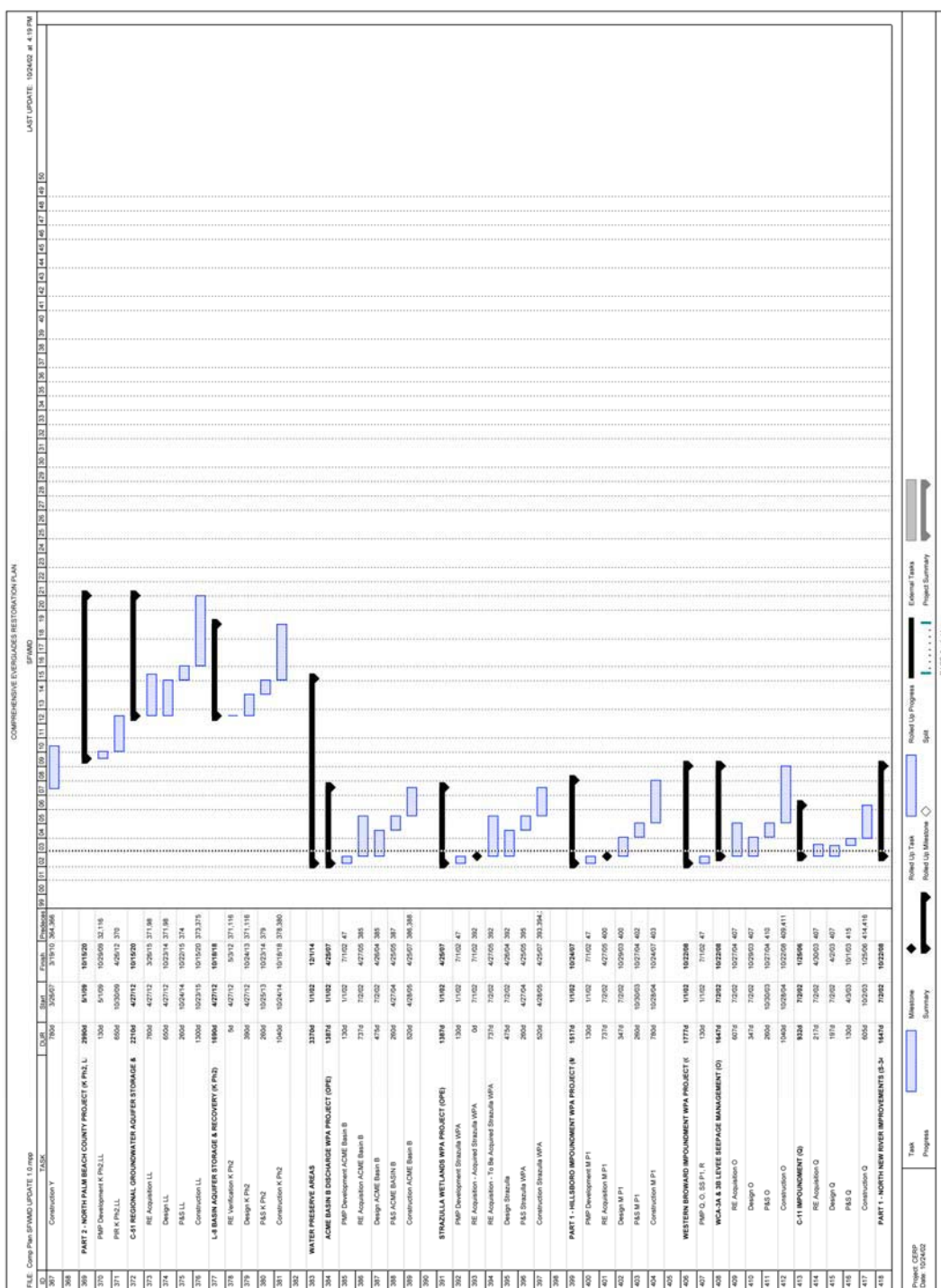


Figure D-1. July 2001 Implementation Schedule of Components Contained in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (Continued).



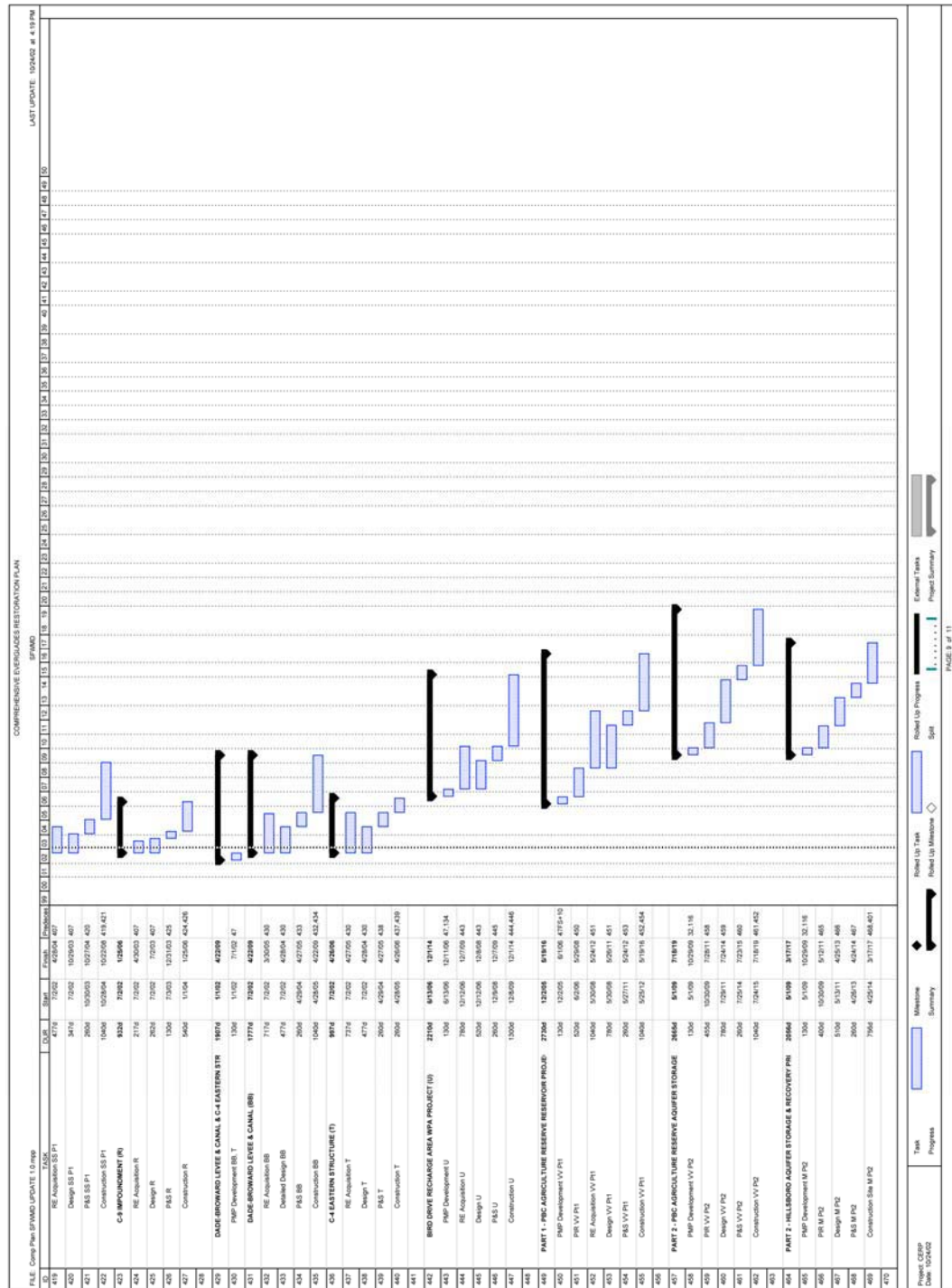


Figure D-1. July 2001 Implementation Schedule of Components Contained in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (Continued).



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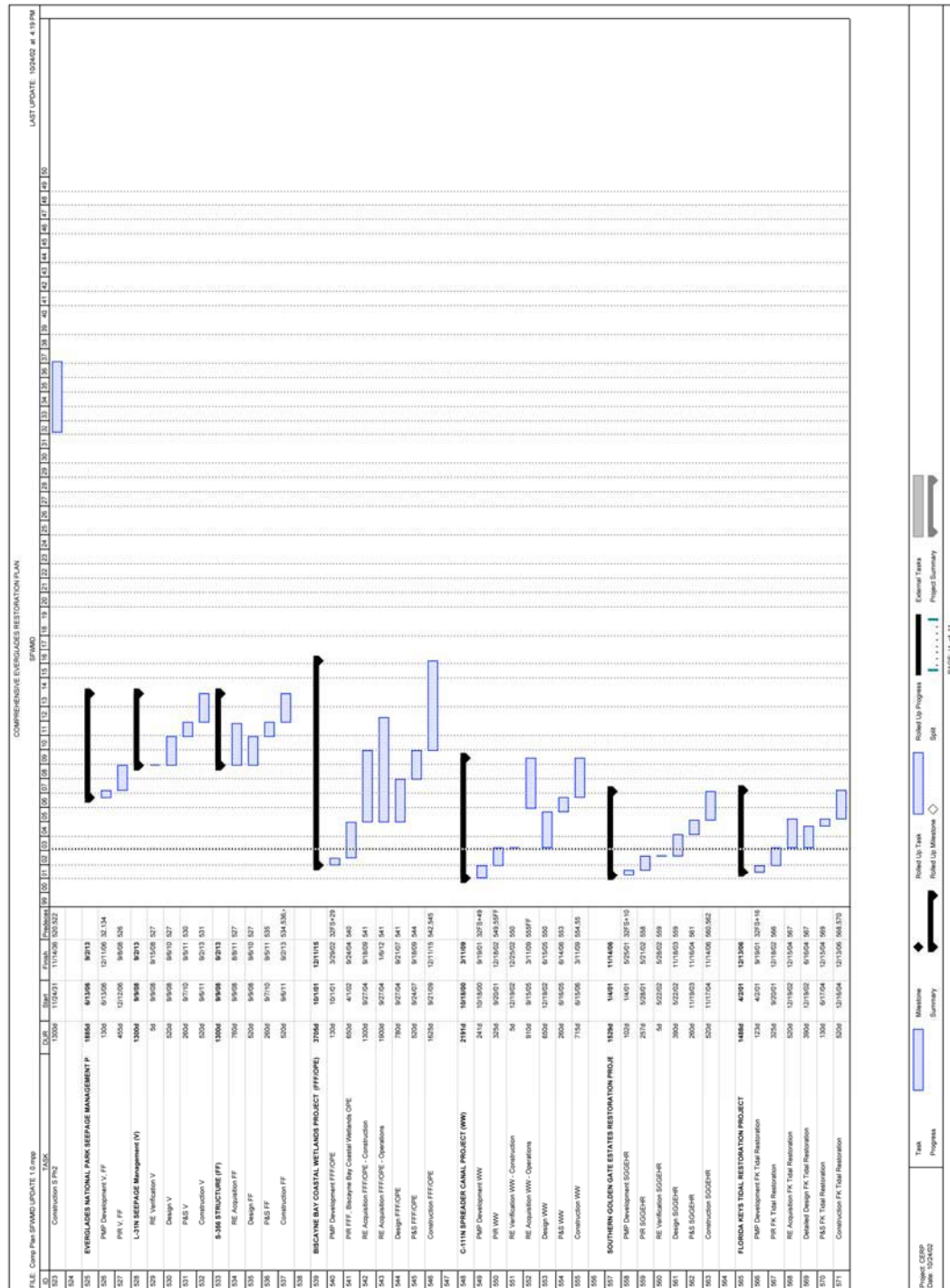


Figure D-1. July 2001 Implementation Schedule of Components Contained in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (Continued).



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